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YOUTH: SEEING POTENTIAL, NOT PATHOLOGY

By

Jan Robbins-Chant ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Center for Health Promotion Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

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Abstract

This study focused on the strengths of youth and the importance of family, peers, schools and communities in helping to provide a framework that facilitates youth reaching their potential. Three hundred and five youth between the ages of 12-18 who attended grades 6-12 in two schools in a small rural town in Alberta completed a 124-question survey. Data were factor analyzed into six categories and relationships were determined between each category and the independent variables of gender, grade, location (of residence) and academic achievement. Results of the study indicated that 80-85% of the youth reported that they viewed themselves as responsible and trustworthy and agreed that their parents had rules and expectations of them. Furthermore, they were able to recognize strengths such as interpersonal competence in themselves as well as in the way others viewed them. There were however areas of concern such as physical activity and structured and unstructured activities and the way youth believed adults connected with them.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and terrorize their teachers (Socrates, 400BC)

Background

Although these words are attributed to Socrates who wrote them over two thousand years ago, the same refrain about children can be heard in modern society. Youth are often stereotyped by the news media, in books and movies, and by parents, schools and communities as being irresponsible individuals who are involved in drugs, criminal action and disrespectful behavior (Bibby, 2001; Scales & Leffert, 1999; Osher, 1996).

Past and present research about youth has examined both the positives and negatives in youth and in their interactions with society. Until recently, much of the research (Bogenshneider, 1996, Bempechat, 1989) about youth tended to focus on risk factors and risk behavior in youth. However, in the last few years there has been increased interest in investigating the role that strengths or positives in youth and in their interactions with others have on healthy youth development.

In my career as a youth addictions counselor, I have had the opportunity to talk with a number of parents on an array of topics about children and youth. One of the concerns that arise most frequently is the "teenage years". Parents with children as young as eight or nine are already worrying about how they are going to "handle" their children during the years of 13 through 17, despite knowing that they are doing a good job of parenting at the present time.

As a result of these concerns, books and magazines that explain how to deal with teens are eagerly read by parents who hope to find a how-to-recipe for producing a compliant teen who will never question the authority of adults until the age of eighteen when they are then deemed, by society, to be adults themselves. A multitude of workshops can be found in small and large centers, offering courses for parents teaching them how to understand their teens, as if at age 13 all of their previous parenting skills and understanding about their child suddenly disappeared or was rendered ineffective. How teens are supposed to function successfully as adults if they have never been given the chance to disagree, make mistakes or take risks, either positive or negative, is not clear from the above sources of information.

The electronic and news media also encourage a negative view about teens, stressing the problems found among a minority of youth and largely ignoring the vast majority of youth who have developed into interesting, capable and caring young adults. In "Canada's teens: Today, yesterday and tomorrow", Bibby (2001) states

> A cursory glance at daily media reports on virtually any subject involving young people makes it abundantly clear that political correctness has not yet been applied to the use of the word "teen". The term continues to be tossed about recklessly with little regard for the human implications of such stereotyping. If any other group reference – such as "black" or "Jew" or "homosexual"- were substituted for "teen" in a headline or story reference to undesirable behavior, people would be threatening lawsuits, asking for retractions, and appealing to human rights commissions (p. 70).

In one catalogue of educational videos that I received, the vast majority of videos dealt with the problems of youth and how to correct them. Newspapers and television news reports appear to present stories that state youth suicide is on the rise, teen drug and alcohol use is out of control, peer pressure is leading youth astray and that youth no longer listen to or care about adults. Blyth and Roehlkepartain in their report entitled, "The troubled journey: A portrait of 6th to 12th grade youth" state that "only one in ten young people meets a vision for healthy growth and development" (1992, p.5). The report does not make clear "Whose vision?" is the referent. Is it a vision put forth by white, middle and upper class adults who see the growth and development of youth with all of the normal ups and downs associated with this stage as pathological? Is it a vision put forth by adults who have forgotten what it is like to be young, make mistakes, experiment, take risks, argue with authority and, in many cases, see the world from an idealistic standpoint? If it is true that only one in ten young people are doing well, how does society end up with so many healthy, functioning, capable adults?

In contrast to this type of information, I found a great deal of information about the resiliency of youth (Benard, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Engle, Castle & Menon, 1996) as well as research (Brendtro & Ness, 1995; Frey, 1999; Gilliam & Scott, 1998) about youth from a strength-based outlook. This research is described in detail later in this document.

Research conducted by the McCreary Center Society indicated that the majority of youth are "healthy, happy, live in a nurturing environment, like school and do not engage in excessive risk-taking" (1993, p. 85). Results from two studies done by the McCreary Center in 1992 and 1998/99 suggested that the 41,000 youth in British Columbia who completed their surveys were not more violent, more suicidal or more

alienated from their parents than youth in the past. Bibby, in his book, "Canada's teens: Today, yesterday and tomorrow", states that "On balance, Canadian teenagers give every indication that they are going to turn out just fine" (2001, p. 323).

The Alberta Profile: Social and Health Indicators of Addiction Report (SHIP) indicates that youth are not increasing their use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. For example, in 1996/97, approximately 71% of Alberta's youth did not smoke cigarettes, a statistic that has stayed fairly constant in the last four years (AADAC, 2000). Later statistics from 1999 report that of Alberta teens (15 and over) who use alcohol, 93% were infrequent (drank less than one or more times per week) drinkers, 96% were infrequent users of marijuana and 99% were infrequent users of hard drugs such as hallucinogens, stimulants and depressants (AADAC, 1999).

Youth violence is another concern often mentioned in the media and by adults. However, in Canada, in 1997, less than 5% of 12-17 year olds were charged with a criminal offence such as a property crime and less than one-fifth of those charged committed some type of violent offence including assault and robbery (Milan, 2000). In other words, out of 100 youth, approximately five were involved in some type of criminal activity while less than one in 100 were perpetrators of a violent act. Violent crimes include homicide, manslaughter, attempted murder, assault, sexual offences, abduction, robbery and weapon offences. In 1998, slightly more than half of all youths charged with violent crimes were charged with assault level 1 (minor assault) (Solicitor General, 1999). While any criminal act cannot be condoned, the statistics demonstrate that youth crime is far from rampant.

Researcher's Beliefs

While growing up, my parents were excellent role models, doing a great deal of volunteer work, much of which involved being associated with youth. I remember as a teenager, hearing young adults in the community speak about my parents and the difference my parents had made in their lives when they were teens. I think, more than anything else, it was my parents' acceptance and respect for those youth as individuals, youth in whom they believed; youth who had the capacity and capabilities to grow into healthy young adults, that made a difference in their lives. I am not sure either of my parents really recognized the contribution they made to those youth, many of whom were deemed as troublesome by other community members. I do know however, that for my siblings and myself that the lessons we learned from our parents about focusing on the strengths of youth has allowed us to have a sense of optimism and joyfulness when interacting with youth today.

From the time I was quite young, I have worked with youth in one capacity or another through both volunteering and in my career. I have always had an innate belief that everyone has positive attributes or strengths and it is important to find those strengths and focus on them rather than looking for what is wrong with a person. Today, as an addictions counselor working with youth, I constantly see their strengths. I have found that the more I empathize, and help youth recognize their strengths, the greater their capacity for self-realization, self-worth and the belief that they can succeed.

Because of my parents' modeling, I think I have probably been using a strength-based approach in my work for a long time. When youth come into my office, they often do so with a great deal of reluctance. Some have been sent from the justice department,

others from school or by their parents. Nearly all of them seem to expect me to launch into a lecture about how they should not do what they are doing whether it be using alcohol, drugs or fighting. Instead of a lecture, I hand them a lined worksheet entitled, "My Power List". None of the lines are filled in and at the bottom of the page there is a saying that that I read in one of Bonnie Benard's articles. It states, "When the message that one consistently hears is, "You are a bright and capable person," one naturally sees oneself as a bright and capable person" (Benard, 1991, p. 12). When youth ask me what they are supposed to do with the piece of paper, I ask that they write down the strengths that they see in themselves. While the most common response is, "I don't have any", after a short discussion that involves explaining what strengths are and that everyone has strengths, the youth are usually able to write down one or two. At each subsequent session, they add to the list. For many of the youth, it becomes easier each time for them to think of their strengths although they are usually still quick to point out their perceived deficits.

Focusing on the strengths in youth is the main tenet of my thesis for my Master of Science degree in Health Promotion Studies. My research has built on what has already been done by organizations such as the Search Institute in Minnesota, USA and the McCreary Center Society in British Columbia, Canada. I have developed a survey instrument that examines the attitudes, behaviors and strengths of youth in a small rural Alberta town. However, instead of examining the strengths of youth in comparison to risk behaviors, my research only examines what youth view as strengths in their family, school, peer and community relationships as well as what strengths youth see in themselves and their perception of what strengths others might see in them.

Goals of the Study and Research Questions

A quantitative survey perspective guides this study. The goals of this proposed study are threefold. The first goal is to have youth complete a survey that offers an opportunity to feel empowered by recognizing the strengths in themselves and in their relationships with others. The second goal is to encourage research that focuses on the strengths of youth instead of the deficits. The third goal is to use the results of the survey as a building block upon which youth, parents, schools and the community can work together to develop and further enhance the strengths that youth already possess. This study will examine the following three research questions:

Research Question 1. What percentage of youth (in a small rural town) experiences the 25 external and internal factors?

Research Question 2. What are the relationships between the external factors, gender, grade, location and academic achievement?

Research Question 3. What are the relationships between the internal factors, gender, grade, location and academic achievement?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review will examine how youth are viewed in both a strength-based and risk-based framework. The concepts of resiliency and protective factors will be discussed within the strength-based framework of youth development. The 40 Developmental Assets and the Developmental Framework, developed by the Search Institute in Minnesota will be examined. The strengths and challenges of using this approach to help explain how youth succeed will also be discussed.

The Developmental Assets Framework

While acknowledging the important role that a problem or risk focused paradigm has in understanding the development of youth, I decided to focus solely on examining the strengths or capacity of youth. Once I had established my focus, I examined the literature for a framework upon which I could base my research. The one I eventually chose is entitled the Developmental Asset Framework. It was developed in 1990, by the Search Institute, "an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application" (Search Institute, 2000, p.1). The Institute states "several intellectual streams feed into this approach, including resiliency and protective factors (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992) and youth development (Pittman & Cahill, 1991)" (Leffert, Benson, Scales, Sharma, Drake & Blyth, 1998, p. 209).

In order to understand the Developmental Assets Framework, it is important that the terms resiliency, protective factors and youth development as used in the framework are discussed. Resiliency encompasses a philosophy that comes from the fundamental belief in every person's capacity for successful transformation and change, no matter what their life's circumstance (Benard, 1991). Protective factors or processes are defined as "individual or environmental safeguards that enhance youngsters' ability to resist stressful life events and promote adaptation and competence (Bogenschneider, 1996, p.4). The term youth development as it is used by the Search Institute in relation to the framework "reflects the primary processes of socialization that are important in development, including relationships, social experiences, social environments, patterns of interaction, norms and competencies" (Leffert, et al, 1998, p. 211).

More than 500,000 6th-12th-grade youth have been involved in research upon which the developmental assets framework has been developed. The Search Institute designed a survey that asked youth to answer 156 questions – 92 of which were about assets and 64 that were about risk factors. Using the concepts of resiliency, protective factors and youth development, the Search Institute Developmental Assets Framework concluded with eight categories. Within each category there are a certain number of assets or protective factors that the Search Institute believes are "critical factors for young people's growth and development" which demonstrate the important ways in which individuals, family, school and community shape young people's lives (Search Institute, 1995, p. 1). Four of the categories focus on the need to enhance internal assets of the individual while the remaining four categories are viewed as external assets which center on the ways in which peers, family, schools and the community can promote positive

growth and development in youth. The four categories of internal assets are Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies and Positive Identity. Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations and Constructive Use of Time are the four categories of external assets.

Risk-based Framework

A risk-based framework focuses on circumstances that put youth at risk. Numerous studies have been conducted on the causes of youth using substances, being violent, dropping out of school, becoming pregnant, exhibiting disruptive behavior and other actions viewed as delinquent by society. The causes of these behaviors are known as risk factors which "refer to environmental factors that either singly or in combination have been shown to render children's failure to thrive more likely" (Howard & Dryden, 1999, p. 2).

Some of the possible determinants of risk are substance abuse, societal factors, family characteristics, education and individual beliefs. Alcohol and drug use, especially when begun before the age of 15, are risk factors, which may compound other risk factors such as unprotected sex, teen pregnancy, drinking and driving and alcohol poisoning (Soren, 1995). Examples of societal factors are where people live, their race and the impact of the media. Family characteristics that include socioeconomic status or social class, number of siblings, family structure, the quality of the parent-child relationship, substance abuse by the parents, poor parental communication and discipline, having a mother who was a teen parent or living with a single parent are risk factors that decrease the likelihood of positive youth development (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1998). Environmental factors such as lower maternal education,

school and having fewer years of high school education can inhibit a youth's ability to overcome adversity. Youth who are less religious, less goal oriented, have poor relationships with friends, parents and authority figures, have been a victim of sexual abuse or are easily influenced by negative peer pressure are also at increased risk to fail. Some of the risk factors among street and homeless youth are unsafe sex practices, drug dependency and mental health issues (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1998).

While it would be remiss to downplay the importance of understanding underlying risk factors and how they can negatively affect youth, risk reduction programs by themselves have been largely unsuccessful (Benard, 1991). Teen smoking and sex are two examples of how programs that are deal with this issues have been unsuccessful. Despite a huge increase in the number of programs aimed at preventing, reducing or stopping teen smoking in the past few years, the percentage of teens that smoke has remained constant (AADAC, 1999). In the article, "Teens and Smoking: They Just Won't Listen", a 15 year study, funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute, found that "students who attended the smoking-prevention programs were just as likely to smoke by their senior-high-school year and the two years afterward, as those who didn't" (Foss, 2000, p. A1). Regarding abstinence only programs, Scales and Leffert (1999) state "not a single scientifically valid evaluation of such programs has shown to be effective either in keeping young people from having sex or in reducing the pregnancy rate among teens who do have intercourse" (p. 1)

In many ways, the use of a risk framework to describe youth is similar to the Western medical model. Very seldom does this medical model address the whole human

being. Instead, a person is no longer seen as a whole person but rather as a disease such as stomach cancer or diabetes. The same holds true for the framework. Researchers, practitioners, parents, teachers, etc., often do not see a young person as a whole person but rather as a "condition" or as a perpetrator of negative social behaviors such as drug user, troublemaker or school dropout. Like the medical model, the emphasis in the risk-based framework is on fixing the condition, not the whole person. When the condition is not easily fixed, the person is often blamed for the condition, which reinforces negative self-identity, and which, in turn, exacerbates the condition (Osher, 1996; Scales, 1999a). In other words, this victim blaming approach translates "needs into deficiencies; place[s] the perceived deficiency in the client; and, frequently isolates the client and the problem from the context in which the problem developed" (Osher, 1996, p. 2).

Critique of the Risk-Based Framework

Critics of the risk perspective believe that there is little to be gained in focusing on what is wrong with an individual or his/her life (Benard, 1995; Scales, 1999a). Research that is based solely on the perceived deficits of youth tends to only tell people what youth are doing poorly. Seldom does it recognize that youth have strengths and abilities that often allow them to successfully cope with the sometimes harsh environment in which they live. There are six problems with focusing on a risk perspective. First, students who are different in appearance, language, culture, values or family structures from the dominant culture are often those perceived to be at risk (Robinson, 1997). This perception may be much more the result of ethnocentricity by the dominant culture than actual fact. Second, while acting out physically, emotionally or sexually by youth is usually seen as a main indicator of risk, in actual fact, youth who are withdrawn or fade

into the woodwork may be just as much at risk, especially if as children they have been sexually abused (Fleming, Muller & Bammer, 1997). Third, categorizing students as at risk or vulnerable can set up scenarios where the youth live up to those expectations (Howard & Dryden, 1999). Fourth, a risk-based framework focuses on a minority of youth and ignores the majority who have healthy, positive lives or have learned to cope well with life in spite of difficulties (Bibby, 2001). Fifth, focusing on risk does a disservice to the majority of youth who despite being labeled at-risk, develop into healthy, competent adults. For example, 75% of children who grow up in alcoholic homes do NOT develop alcohol problems (Benard, 1991). Perhaps, however, the most compelling reason not to focus on youths as problems or victims is that when youth are perceived in this way, they see themselves as having a very limited social role in society which may make them "question the relevance of their relationship to the larger social, political and economic context in which they live" (Finn & Checkoway, 1998, p. 2).

The Concept of Resiliency in the Strength-Based/Asset Development

One of the three major components of the strength-based framework is the concept of resiliency. Resiliency is a philosophy that comes from the fundamental belief in every person's capacity for successful transformation and change, no matter what their life's circumstance (Benard, 1995). The resiliency framework builds on three theories that can be used to explain both risk and strength factors. These theories are: Social Learning theory which asserts that behavior is learned and molded by example (Mearns, 2000); Cognitive Behavioral theory which examines how the way in which people view themselves affects their well-being (Beck Institute for Cognitive Therapy and Research, 2000); and Health Realization theory which explores the importance of thought,

perceptions and behavior modeling in helping a person cope or bounce back from difficult situations (Turner, Norman & Zunz, 1995). Benard states that human beings have an "innate self-righting mechanism, the developmental homeostasis that is genetically encoded in all of us and propels us toward healthy development" (1996, p. 2). According to Benard (personal communication, April 1997) "resilience is part of the human condition and the birthright of all human beings".

History of Resiliency

The idea that youth are capable, competent people is not a particularly new idea. In 1921, Karl Wilker, a prison warden who reformed one of Berlin's worst youth prisons was fired by German bureaucrats because he wished to give decision-making responsibility to youth. Other early experts in different countries also had an optimistic view about youth that differs greatly from much of the pessimism found in today's risk focus perspective. Youth workers such as Adams, who lived in the USA and was the main force behind the worldwide, modern juvenile court, "saw delinquency as a spirit of adventure displayed by youth condemned to dreary existences on dead-end city streets" (Brendtro & Ness, 1995, p. 4). Roberts (1998) reported on Ashton-Warner's work with aggressive Maori youth by helping them see their own competence and creativity. Parciak (2000) reported that Korczak, a writer, teacher and director for a school and orphanage for Jewish children, who perished at Treblinka along with 200 Jewish orphans, charged that youth must be given respect. Korczak developed youth courts that were governed by their peers in the belief that troubled children could rebuild their lives on standards of truth and justice (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1992). These people worked with youth who were involved with drugs, were violent, and often came from

homes where sexual and physical abuse was frequent (Brendtro & Ness, 1995). However, they continued to see the strengths in youth and help them build on their innate capabilities.

Protective Factors

By the 1950s, many researchers and practitioners, dissatisfied with the deficit paradigm, started to focus on what makes youth resilient in spite of overwhelming odds (Howard & Dryden, 1999). However, the concept of resiliency in youth has only become operationalized in the last two decades. One of the main aspects of resiliency is that of protective factors which fall into the following three basic categories: individual characteristics, social bonding; and healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior (Pollard & Hawkins, 1999). Protective factors can be defined as "individual or environmental safeguards that enhance youngsters' ability to resist stressful life events and promote adaptation and competence (Bogenschneider, 1996, p. 4).

Instead of looking at what is not working with youth, as is evident in the risk-based framework, protective factors look at what is working positively for an individual or community. One of the main tenets of the resiliency concept is that interventions that enhance protective factors and promote resilience will be more effective than interventions that focus on risk factors and how to reduce them (Pollard & Hawkins, 1999). To better understand protective factors, it is important to examine the three aforementioned categories of protective factors – individual characteristics, social bonding and healthy beliefs and clear standards in greater detail.

Individual characteristics, the first protective factor, includes attributes such as easy temperament, self-efficacy (a belief that one can successfully perform a desired

behavior) and problem-solving abilities (Smith & Prior, 1995). Social competence and autonomy are also important individual protective factors for youth (Benard, 1991).

Studies have found that individual genetic predispositions such as temperament and personality and qualities such as self-esteem and social skills all play a role in resiliency (Basic Behavioral Science Task Force of the National Advisory Mental Health Council, 1996). Children that have easy temperaments are more protected against stress than children who had temperaments that do not react well to change or stressful situations (Smith & Prior, 1995; Tschann, Kaiser, Chesney, Alkon & Boyce, 1996). Scales & Leffert (1999) state, "The luckiest children start out with innate dispositions and traits that lead them to be curious, happy, outgoing, and confident children who then attract adult attention and caring" (p. 4). Youth who believe that they can succeed at various activities, whether it be school, sports or being a good friend, are seen as having a high self-efficacy which allows them to overcome difficulties (Maddux, 1995). A high level of problem-solving abilities also serve a protective function because they allow youth to figure out alternate solutions for problems within themselves or in their environment (Benard, 1991). An interpersonal awareness and empathy, ability to plan and, interestingly, a sense of humor are all aspects of social competence (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgit and Target, 1994). Youth who are empathetic and responsive to others often work hard to help others and elicit positive responses from others (Benard, 1991; Tate & Wasmund, 1999). Many resilient youth have a delightful sense of humor that helps them to deal with some of the difficulties they face. Although much is still unknown about how humor acts as a protective factor, Keltner, cited in Happy Days, suggests that humor can transform the sadness of a tragedy because "laughter is a healthy

mechanism; it allows you to disassociate yourself from the event so that you can engage in more healthful and social emotions" (Wellner & Adox, 2000, p. 38). Autonomy or an internal locus of control or sense of self-worth are instrumental in acting as a protective factor for youth (Benard, 1991). Young people, who believe they have some control over their environment, can act independently and have a sense of who they are, usually thrive despite adversity.

The second protective factor, social bonding, can occur in the family, peer group, school and community. It is characterized by young people having caring, positive relationships with people who recognize and value youth (Pollard & Hawkins, 1999). Research (Benard, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1999) indicates that resilient youth have at least one person in their life who accept them unconditionally regardless of what they do or how they act. While the ways in which families can act as a protective factor for youth will be examined further on in this discussion, it is important to remember that "what outsiders perceive to be risky or neglectful parental behavior may seem to many parents to be appropriate, adaptive and beneficial" (Engle et al, 1996, p. 626).

Another external protective factor for youth can be their peer group. Research (Ungar, 2000) has shown that despite much publicity about the negative influence of peer groups, adolescents who identify strongly with their peer group are more likely to ask people including peers, friends, parents and other adults for support. They are also more likely to accept support and talk about and resolve their problems than youth who do not feel connected to a peer group (Benard, 1991; Gipson, Oritz-Self & Cobb-Roberts, 1999; Ungar, 2000). Ungar (2000) found the adolescent peer group "to be necessary for the

accomplishment of developmental tasks and critical for cognitive and emotional growth" (p. 2).

Like families and peer groups, schools can be an important protective factor for youth in a variety of ways. Teachers who take a personal interest in youth can act as positive role models as well as confidants. In fact, the most frequently identified, non-family individual who had an impact in the lives of resilient youth is a teacher (Benard, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Howard & Dryden, 1999). Schools that have good academic records, clear regulations, high levels of student participation and high expectations for achievement for all youth tend to enhance the well-being of their students and provide a safe and secure place for them to grow (Benard, 1995; Blyth & Roehlkepartain, 1992; Kowaleski-Jones, 2000). Project ACHIEVE, a schoolwide prevention and early intervention program in the United States, demonstrated that "placing high expectations on students to make good choices in their social encounters in school and at home carries over into high expectations for students' academic achievement" (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1999, p. 253).

A final aspect of the protective factor of social bonding is the community. The church, schools, social agencies, police, businesses and volunteer organizations all form a social support network or community ecosystem that provides certain assets for healthy youth development (Brendtro & Cunningham, 1998; Howard & Dryden, 1999). For youth, communities often provide informal social controls, sanctions for inappropriate behavior, information about various resources necessary for healthy human development and interrelationships among themselves and other community members (Benard, 1991; Kowaleski-Jones, 2000). Since communities have a strong influence on families and

schools, they also have the propensity to affect the outcome of youth (Benard, 1995). Communities that support active participation of youth in numerous activities that directly or indirectly involve some working aspect of the community, allows youth to develop competencies both within the community and themselves (Benard, 1995; Bogenschneider, 1996).

The third protective factor that is an integral part of the concept of resiliency, is that of healthy beliefs and clear standards (Pollard & Hawkins, 1999). Examples of healthy beliefs are respecting oneself and others, believing in a positive future, caring about others, hopefulness and a sense of purpose (Benard, 1991). Clear standards such as morals and rules are important for positive youth development because they provide boundaries for youth (Brooks, 1994). Family, peers, schools and/or the community may set these standards. Research (Brooks, 1994; Osher, 1996) indicates that individuals, families, schools and communities that promote these two ideals have a higher degree of resiliency than those that do not. Although it appears reasonable that healthy beliefs and clear standards are protective in nature, this factor must be interpreted with caution. Different cultures and segments of society may have healthy, but different beliefs and standards than those of the dominant culture and main segment of society (Engle et al, 1996). In one study of a self–esteem program for girls from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, the researchers found that "class bias inherent in the indicators of healthy functioning inadvertently made the girls devalue their knowledge and competencies; they had lower self-esteem after participating in the training" (Ungar, 2000, p. 2). Therefore, it is imperative that researchers and practitioners gain in-depth knowledge about the

youth they are working with before deciding what are healthy beliefs and clear standards and how they act as a protective factor.

Critique of the Resiliency Concept

Although the resiliency concept has been viewed favorably by many researchers and practitioners, there have been some concerns raised. Some researchers question whether this concept is not being overemphasized and therefore the effect of risk factors on youth are ignored (Engle, et al, 1996). Others wonder how valuable factors like social competence and self-efficacy are in providing new approaches to prevention (Howard & Dryden, 1999). Pollard & Hawkins suggest that "the effect of ignoring risk and focusing solely on enhancing protection or assets on the development of adolescent problem behaviors is unknown" (1999, p. 3). They also felt that there was a need for more research on "the relationship between risk and protective factor exposure and positive outcomes in adolescence, especially for those with both low levels of risk and low levels of protection" (1999, p. 7).

Concluding Remarks

Resiliency is a concept that has its roots in the work of early pioneers who valued youth and the strengths that they found in them. In the 1950s, it became part of a paradigm shift from a risk-based framework that focused on the deficits of youth, their peers, families, schools and communities to a strength-based framework that examined what factors facilitated youth, even those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to succeed. However, it was not until the 1980s that the concept of resiliency was brought to the forefront in literature about youth. Three categories of protective factors were determined to be instrumental in helping youth develop into healthy, productive and

caring young adults. These categories are individual characteristics, social bonding and healthy beliefs and clear standards. Although some aspects of resiliency need further research and it is not always clear how the protective factors interact with each other and on behavior outcome, the move away from risk-based perspective to a strength-based focus may be necessary so that youth can recognize and achieve their full potential. Resiliency plays an important role in a strength-based perspective as described in the following discussion.

The Developmental Asset Framework

The Search Institute in Minnesota was instrumental in advancing the idea of an asset developmental framework which identifies the elements of a strength-based approach to healthy development in youth. Using the concept of resiliency and protective factors, as well as their knowledge of adolescent development, the Institute developed a framework with eight categories. Within each category there are a certain number of assets or protective factors that the Search Institute believes are "critical factors for young people's growth and development" (Search Institute, 1995, p. 1) and which demonstrate the important ways in which individuals, family, school and community shape young people's lives. Four of the categories focus on the need to enhance internal assets of the individual while the remaining four categories are viewed as external assets which center on the ways in which peers, family, schools and the community can promote positive growth and development in youth. The four categories of internal assets are Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies and Positive Identity. Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations and Constructive Use of Time are the four categories of external assets.

Much of the research about assets comes from research using a survey developed by the Institute entitled, "Profiles of student life: Attitudes and behaviors". The survey explores certain high-risk behavior patterns in students as well as the specific attitudes and behaviors that make students thrive. The high-risk behaviors examined were alcohol use, illicit drug use, sexual activity and violence while the thriving behaviors are success in school, diversification, maintenance of good health and delay of gratification (Scales, Benson & Leffert, 2000).

Although the original asset development framework had 30 assets, in 1996, after doing research that included "focus groups to deepen understanding of how the developmental assets are experienced by urban youth, youth living in poverty, and youth of color" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 5), the Institute released its current framework with 40 assets; 20 of them are in the internal assets categories and the other half in the external assets categories (Search Institute, 1997; 1995). While these assets do not include the physical requirements such as housing, food and clothing, and the Institute acknowledges that it is dubious that the 40 assets are the "only 40 things that youth need, and they might not even be the best 40" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 14), these assets can provide a strong safety net that help youth develop positively even when there are multiple risk factors (Scales & Leffert, 1999). The Institute, in their on-going research about assets, found that when youth have some of the assets, they serve not only as protective factors, but also promote positive attitudes and behaviors, and as the number of assets increase there is a corresponding decrease in the number of high-risk behaviors (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Their research also showed that "having protective factors as a young adolescent

was even more influential in later positive outcomes than having risk factors as a young adolescent; in other words, assets were stronger than risks" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 7).

External Assets

The 20 external assets are divided among four categories: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations and Constructive Use of Time. According to the Search Institute, these assets "provide the web of safety and support that is important for stimulating and nurturing healthy development" (Leffert, Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1997, p. 3). These assets are provided by people who are involved in youth's lives: families, peers, school staff and community members.

The six assets in the Support category include family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, caring neighborhood, caring school climate and parent involvement in schooling. Despite much rhetoric about the decreased importance of families and the loss of traditional values, a 1994 Angus Reid opinion survey reports that

> ...two-thirds of Canadians strongly agree that their families are the greatest joy in their lives. Regardless of age, income or family structure, most Canadians feel that their families are stable and satisfying, and three-quarters describe their family lives as "happy' and "full of love" (Milan, 2000, p.3).

Family support (asset #1) is one of the most important protective factors for youth (Benard, 1991; Osher 1996). In the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, youth "who were at-risk but had positive parenting scored at least as high as children in more favorable circumstances who received negative parenting" (Milan, 2000, p. 11).

Children who grow up with warmth, caring, boundaries and expectations develop into healthy teenagers and young adults (McCreary Center Society, 1999; Search Institute, 1995). Interestingly, although much of the research on families has reiterated the need for two biological parent households, some research indicates that "children living in non-nuclear family situations can indeed develop and thrive as well, if not better than, children in the same community who live with both biological parents" (Engle, et al, 1996, p. 628). The reason for this may be that in some cultures within Canada, there is a more child-centered approach in households headed by females (Engle, et al, 1996). Since no child lives alone, family support has been identified as an essential factor for positive youth development. Therefore, it is necessary that when working with youth, family strengths are recognized and become part of any treatment plan or program (Batavick, 1997). Epstein, a practitioner who works with youth and their families, defines strength-based assessments as:

> The measurement of those emotional and behavioral skills, competencies and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment; contribute to satisfying relationships with family members, peers and adults; enhance one's ability to deal with adversity and stress; and promote one's personal, social and academic development (1998, p. 2)

Positive family communications (asset #2) are an important factor in promoting healthy youth development. This type of communication means that youth's views are respected and valued and youth are listened to, not just talked to. In the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a survey of approximately 90 000 youth, the

results consistently indicated that youth who felt closely connected to their families were less likely to engage in any type of risky behaviors (Gilbert, 1997).

Other positive adult relationships may also serve as a protective factor for youth (asset #3). This person may be a relative, neighbor, teacher, youth leader, religious figure or some other community member such as a peer's parent. Studies indicate that youth who have an established relationship with a caring adult are less likely to engage in risky behavior, perform better in school and have stronger reasoning abilities (Benard, 1991; Engle, et al, 1996; Search Institute, 1995). Mentoring programs such as those that have been developed through Big Brothers, Big Sisters have demonstrated that children thrive when they are matched with a caring adult who sees the potential, not pathology, in a child.

Unfortunately, many youth believe that adults have a negative view of them. This sometimes results in youth self-fulfilling these negative images (Search Institute, 1995; Ungar, 2000). Asset #4, a caring neighborhood recognizes the strengths of youth and helps youth to build on those strengths. Neighborhoods that are lacking in resources such as residential stability, a strong economic base, good schools and some level of public safety tend to provide fewer opportunities for the healthy development of youth. Conversely, neighborhoods that have interrelationships among community members, information flow and community sanctions for inappropriate behavior for both youth and adults, provide a protective umbrella for youth (Kowaleski-Jones, 2000).

A caring school climate (asset #5) and parental involvement in schooling (asset #6) are both important aspects for positive youth development. Schools that have a strong welcoming tradition in their program, develop a language of health and strength

when talking with and about youth, involve families and have high expectations are viewed positively by a majority of youth (Brooks, 1994; Gillam & Scott, 1998; Scales, 1999a). The relationship between parents who are actively involved in their children's schooling and children's positive connections with school are well-documented (Benard, 1991; Gillam & Scott, 1998). Scales & Leffert (1999) state " When parents more specifically provide support by becoming involved in their child's schooling, the positive effects can be profound" (p. 35). They also found that children whose parents were involved in their schooling did better academically, regardless of socioeconomic status (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

The Empowerment category examines the way in which adults can help youth feel good about themselves and use their skills to be assets in the community. The importance of a community that values youth, provides youth with useful roles, encourages community service among youth and ensures the safety of its youth can not be understated. However, the study conducted by the Search Institute indicated that only 20% of youth surveyed felt that their community valued them (Scales, 1999a). Part of the problem is that in North America we live in a society that tends to either expect youth to act like young adults or conversely, ignores them and treat them like they are very young children (Search Institute, 1997). Many people also see youth as "passive recipients of services rather than active participants"(Finn & Checkoway, 1998, p. 2).

Recently, there has been a move away from perceiving youth as passive individuals and instead are seeing youth as resources. When youth are provided with useful roles (asset #8) and are involved in community service (asset #9) they increase their leadership skills and awareness of the community, interact with people of different

generations and learn about the political, social and economic aspects of the community in which they live (Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Frey, 1999). When youth are seen as resources, they feel valued (asset #7) and connected to their community (Scales & Leffert, 1999). This connectedness helps to decrease risk behavior because they have a sense of ownership and pride in the community. Interestingly, adults who participate in community activities often started their community involvement when they were young. Data from the National Survey of Volunteering, Giving and Participation indicates that, "as a youth, involvement in youth groups and having parents who volunteered influenced later community participation" (Jones, 2000, p. 19). Safety (asset #10) is also an important component of empowerment. Youth who feel safe at home, school and in the community are able to focus on other aspects of their lives and are usually less involved in risk behaviors. Research indicates that if a youth does not feel safe at one of the aforementioned sites, being able to feel safe at one or two of the other sites can have a moderating effect on risk factors (Benard, 1991).

The Boundaries and Expectations category focuses on some of the structures that are important for positive youth development. Family, school and neighborhood boundaries are an integral part of helping youth grow and mature. Boundaries allow a youth to learn what is acceptable and what is not. Adult role models and positive peer influence provide youth with examples of pro-social behavior. High expectations by teachers, parents and community members can be instrumental in helping youth develop an internal motivation to achieve.

That youth want and need boundaries is well documented in the research (Benard, 1991). Parents, schools and communities that have firm boundaries (asset #11, 12 &13)

in aspects of safety, expected behavior and discipline allow youth to feel safe and secure (Brooks, 1994). They know what is expected of them and what the consequences are if they do not live up to those expectations. Boundaries work best, however, when youth help to set or make the boundaries and are part of the decision–making process (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

However, at the same time youth want it understood that parents should not set boundaries that can be viewed as hypocritical. For youth to exhibit positive, responsible behavior they need to have parents and/or other adults model what that behavior should be (asset #14). The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health determined that youth who live in homes where there is little drinking, smoking or drug use and no guns are less likely to use alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or guns (Gilbert, 1997). Positive peer influence (asset # 15) is an important component for youth because it allows youth to see the strengths in other youth. Peers who model responsible, healthy behavior can help other youth exhibit this behavior as well. In fact, peer mediation, peer tutoring, brainstorming, class discussions, cooperative learning, and peer counseling groups have proven very effective in reducing risk behaviors in youth (Benard, 1991; Henley, 1998). In the article, "Developing Relationships that Build Resiliency: Including Peers in the Wraparound Process", the authors wrote:

> One of the most important categories of "natural" helpers for youth in the wraparound process is their friends and peers. Many resiliency researchers (e.g., Werner & Smith, 1982) have noted that such an informal network of peer relationships can build resiliency in youth.

> This is especially true if those relationships fulfill the youth's need to belong (Gipson, et al, 1999, p. 1).

Parents and schools who have high expectations of youth (asset #16) help to encourage youth to do well and believe in themselves (Benard, 1995). Parents who set high expectations for their children and are emotionally available to help them achieve physically, emotionally, mentally and socially, to the best of their ability, tend to have children who are involved in fewer risk behaviors (Brooks, 1994). Communities that value youth often set high expectations for them because they expect youth to succeed and play a vital role in the community (Finn & Checkoway, 1998). Schools that motivate youth to achieve academically and behaviorally focus on the strengths of the individual and ensure that the school program effectively builds on those strengths (Kowaleski-Jones, 2000).

The last of the four external categories, Constructive Use of Time, emphasizes the need for youth to be involved in pastimes that include spending time at home, and in creative activities, youth programs and the religious community. The Search Institute (1997) states that youth who have interesting and/or enriching activities (asset #17 & 18) to do are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Spending time involved in music, theater or other arts for three or more hours a week and being active in sports, clubs or organizations at school or in the community for three or more hours a week helps to build on strengths other than academic ones (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Youth who find learning difficult may shine when doing some type of creative activity or sport. However, it may be difficult for youth to be that involved due to financial, transportation and time constraints. In rural areas, most youth are bused home after school and it may not always

be feasible for parents to drive into town to pick up their children or take them to town in the evening and wait for them to finish their activity. Recently, there has been a backlash by parents who are tired of living by a schedule that includes driving their children to a host of afterschool activities. In Wayzata, Minnesota, parents and community leaders are asking "coaches, dance instructors, churches and leaders of youth groups to cut back on practice, rehearsals and meetings" (Belluck, 2000, p. A18).

Being involved in religious activities (asset # 19) is also viewed as necessary for positive youth development. This research indicates that spirituality in youth is important (Benard, 1991; Benson, 1997; Gillam & Scott, 1998). Spirituality in this context is seen as a universal human capacity that does not have to be religious in nature (Benson, 1997). Instead, spirituality is viewed as a belief in a higher power that offers a message of hope (Benson, 1997; Gillam & Scott, 1998). The number of youth who believe in the importance of spirituality increases when youth belong to caring families, have positive peer relationships, bond with their schools and live in communities that value youth (Benson, 1997). However, spiritual beliefs can also help to provide stability and meaning for youth and their families when they are struggling to overcome adversity (Benard, 1991).

Research (Scales & Leffert, 1999) indicates it is important for youth to spend time with their families (asset #20) and not be out with their peers more than two nights per week unless they have something special to do. However, if a youth's homelife is dysfunctional and the youth have peers who are positive role models, it might be healthier for them to spend a majority of time with their peers. The 20 external assets are protective factors that help youth make healthy choices for themselves and others.

Understanding the importance of the family, peers, school and community and the way they interact with each other is essential for promoting healthy youth development. The more external assets youth have, the greater the chance that they will be able to cope with adversity and become productive young adults.

Internal Assets

Many of the 20 assets listed in the internal assets categories for youth closely parallel the first protective factor in resiliency: individual characteristics. In the category Commitment to Learning, asset # 21 is achievement motivation. Research (Benard, 1995; Brooks, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1999) indicates that youth who have high expectations of themselves and are motivated to do well in school, tend to be more resilient. School environments that make youth feel that their input is important and that it is possible for them to succeed, help youth make an internal commitment to learn that helps them to be motivated to achieve (Leffert, et al, 1997; Scales, 1996). Young people who feel close or bond to their schools (asset #24) tend to have positive experiences within the school setting. A school environment that empowers and includes youth in the majority of school decisions, enhances their ability to achieve academically and increases their feelings of self-worth, motivates them to achieve in a variety of areas (Brooks, 1994; Gillam & Scott, 1998; Osher, 1996).

Youth who have the assets of integrity, responsibility, honesty and restraint have an inner locus of control. This concept refers to people's beliefs regarding their ability to control their lives. People who believe that the events that occur in their lives are primarily the result of their own behavior are said to have an internal locus of control (Grantz, Mackey, Otterman, & Wise, 1999). These four assets (#28-31) are part of the

Values category. Youth internalize values modeled by their parents, peers, schools and communities as well as through their own world-view. However, the effectiveness of values as assets that promote healthy development in youth is undermined if adults have a philosophy of do as I say, not as I do (Benard, 1991). For example, if youth know that their parents lie, cheat, steal, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, use drugs or have extramarital affairs, they are more likely to question the importance of the assets listed above.

Fortunately, youth who have an inner locus of control are able to stand up for what they believe in and say no to activities they do not wish to be involved with (asset #28). They believe that they are responsible for the choices they make (asset #30) and when they make a mistake they can recognize and admit it (asset #29). The ability to practice restraint, especially in the area of sexual activity or substance use, is also indicative of an inner locus of control (asset #31). An inner locus of control is important for the healthy development of youth because it helps them feel that they have some control over their environment as well as themselves (Benard, 1991). The Value category also includes the assets of caring (#26) and equality and justice (#27). The ability to care about others and believe in equality and social justice for all demonstrates the characteristics of empathy and responsiveness to others. Youth who have these two assets "often have very ethical or moral views of the world" (Tate & Wasmund, 1999, p. 178). In some cases, these two assets can become deficits if youth value them to the extent that they are inconsiderate of themselves (Tate & Wasmund, 1999). In other words, if their need to help others supersedes caring about themselves, they may be at-risk because they might have difficulty setting healthy boundaries.

Social Competencies is the third category of internal assets. The five assets in this category are planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills and peaceful conflict resolution. Resilient youth tend to have good problem-solving skills that enhance their ability to plan and make decisions or choices (asset #32) that are appropriate for them (Benard, 1991). Being able to plan helps youth focus on the future and take steps towards the goals they have set for themselves. Being able to problem solve is helpful when making choices because youth can look at the pros and cons of various options and decide what option is best. Youth who are able to engage in peaceful conflict resolution (asset #36) often have excellent problem solving skills that allow them to find alternative solutions in a conflict rather than using some type of violence to resolve the conflict. Parents, schools and communities that have clear standards about the acceptable ways in which to resolve conflicts and effectively model those practices provide an environment that allows youth to develop those skills (Benard, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Youth who get along well with their peers, parents and other adults (asset #33) are often motivated to achieve and have the capacity to trust other people. The ability to trust is instrumental for healthy development in youth. Studies indicate that youth who have difficulty trusting are less likely to feel connected to their peers, parents, school and community which, in turn, makes them feel more alienated and less motivated to achieve (Brendtro, et al, 1992).

Cultural competence (asset #34), a fourth asset found in the Social Competence category is defined as youth having knowledge and comfort with people of different racial backgrounds (Search Institute, 1997). In today's world, there is an excellent

possibility that youth, especially in large urban areas, will interact with people of different racial backgrounds. Therefore, the need to understand and respect the cultures of other people is paramount. As in many other instances, the way parents, peers, schools and communities demonstrate their understanding and respect of different cultures will influence the way in which youth view these cultures (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Resistance skills (asset # 35), a fifth asset found in social competence, means that a youth learns how to resist the use of alcohol and other drugs, engage in sexual activity, cheat or steal or skip school. Scales & Leffert (1999) found that programs that used frameworks that emphasized social skill building and that were interactive in nature helped youth develop more effective resistance skills. The belief that a youth had about his or her ability to combat the pressures to use substances, or engage in other risky behavior was also seen as an important component in having resistance skills (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Although much has been written about the impact of peer pressure on youth engaging in risky behavior, a recent study questions this premise. In the "Myth of peer pressure", Ungar (2000) explains what he found in his qualitative study of 41 high-risk adolescents in the following:

> While the concept of peer pressure enables adults to explain youth's troubling behaviors, content analysis of the participant's accounts of their lives revealed peer pressure to be a myth. The youths indicated that adoption of the behavior and appearance of peers was a consciously employed strategy to enhance personal and social power. Association with peers was used to construct and maintain health-

> promoting identities that challenged the stigmatizing labels given to them by others (p. 1).

Therefore, youth appear to belong to a certain peer group because of the connectedness they feel toward members of the group, rather than because of the behaviors exhibited by the group.

The final category of internal assets is Positive Identity. Assets such as personal control, self-esteem, sense of purpose and positive view of personal future are found in this category. Resilient youth who have a sense of control over what happens to them (asset #37) are able to separate themselves emotionally from dysfunctional environments, realize that they are not the cause of the dysfunction and plan for a different type of future (Benard, 1991). Youth who feel that they have a purpose in life (asset #39), whether it is volunteering their time, helping out their family either financially or emotionally, or contributing in some other way to society, increases their ability to cope with adversity and helps them delay immediate gratification for a fulfilling later gratification (Benard, 1991). Having a purpose in life, also increases youth's feelings of self-esteem (asset # 38) and self-efficacy (Brooks, 1994). Although the word self-esteem has sometimes been criticized for being overused, youth who feel good about themselves emotionally, find it easier to handle disappointments and view themselves as worthy of respect (Benard, 1991; Brooks, 1994). Being optimistic about the future (asset #40) is an important component of a resilient youth. Studies indicate that teenagers who have hope for the future are more likely to delay pregnancy and childbirth than those who see little or no options in their future (Bempechat, 1989; Benard, 1991). In the article, "The Courage to Expect Greatness From Our Children", Gilliam and Scott write, "It appears

that the most prominent feature in resilient individuals is their ability to maintain hope. Resilient individuals are able to see the bigger picture and the potential for a brighter future (1998, p. 177).

Youth who have a high number of the 20 internal assets usually have a better sense of their worth as individuals (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Increasing the number of internal assets will help lessen the negative effects of exposure to risk (Pollard & Hawkins, 1999). Although some of the 20 assets may be gained through personal growth, parents, peers, schools and communities can play a significant role in enhancing these protective factors and thereby promoting healthy development in youth.

The Search Institute believes that the 40 developmental assets serve to protect youth from problem behaviors and at the same time promote positive attitudes and behaviors. However, in order for the assets to be truly effective there must be a commitment from all members of society to help youth develop into healthy young adults.

> Ultimately, developmental assets are most effectively instilled in youth when many sectors in a community come together to develop a vision for positive youth development and work together to surround every child and teenager with repeated exposure to the assets of support, discipline, structure and values (Search Institute, 1995, p. 4).

Strengths of the Developmental Asset Framework

The Search Institute has identified five strengths in using the 40 developmental assets and the eight categories in the developmental asset framework to "illuminate the positive relationships, opportunities, competencies, values and self-perceptions that youth

need to succeed" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p.5). The developmental assets framework has been developed from studies with more than 500,000 6th-12th-grade youth.

First, the Search Institute believes that by focusing on youth assets that help young people to grow up healthy, they are providing a counterbalance to the "distorted, negative view of young people" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 1) that many people have of youth. They are not stating that prevention programs are not important but rather, by understanding and focusing on assets, prevention programs have a greater chance to succeed because they are multifaceted and emphasize the importance of social relationships, positive values and capabilities of youth (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Second, they believe the developmental assets framework provides a common language for core elements of positive youth development. Adults who are professionals and non-professionals can easily understand the categories and the assets that are found in each category. Youth can also understand the framework so that they can offer their perceptions on what they need for their own healthy development. The ease of understanding the 40 developmental assets and the eight categories in the developmental framework also increases the potential or possibility that results gathered from the survey will be utilized within the community.

Third, the framework "is intended to create a unified picture of positive development capable of uniting citizens and multiple socializing systems around a shared vision" (Leffert, et al, 1998, p. 211). Instead of communities looking at what is wrong with youth they can unite around a shared vision that builds on the strengths of youth and other community members to promote positive youth development. Discussions can range across generations as community members work together to enable youth to

succeed. For example, the category, Support, with its six assets that include family, school, adult and community support are easy for people to relate to and can serve as a starting point for discussion about how to help ensure those types of support are available for youth. Thus, this vision has the propensity to enhance the positive effects of community for all its members.

Fourth, the 40 developmental assets " reflect primary socialization processes that every resident can do something about. They represent the everyday acts of involvement and nurturing that are within the grasp of all caring adults and youth, not just trained youth workers" (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 12). Understanding the importance of these assets to promote healthy youth development will enable community members to empower themselves to take action.

Fifth, by completing a survey, a portrait of youth is presented which has the potential for the community to enhance the developmental assets that youth need to succeed. If the results of the survey are disseminated in the community through town meetings and at school assemblies and through parent meetings, the community will have information that will allow them to understand the importance of focusing on the developmental assets and learn how to strengthen them so that all youth can succeed.

Although the developmental asset framework is not without challenges as the Search Institute readily admits (Scales & Leffert, 1999), the ease with which the framework can be understood helps to encourage community members to act with youth to increase the ability of their youth to succeed. The 40 developmental assets and the resulting framework complements research (Benard, 1995; Blyth and Leffert, 1995; Brooks, 1994; Osher, 1996) that demonstrates the importance of understanding youth

development from a multifaceted approach and thus provides a useful addition to research on youth.

Critique of the Developmental Asset Framework

Although the position of viewing youth from a strength-based instead of a risk-based perspective has been generally well received by people who work with youth, there are some questions and concerns about asset development that need to be identified. The Search Institute is aware of the concerns and addresses many of them in a chapter entitled, "Postscript: Lessons from the Research" in their book entitled, "Developmental Assets: A synthesis of the scientific research on adolescent development" (1999).

First, the effect of ignoring risk and focusing solely on increasing assets is not known. Pollard and Hawkins state that while "protective factors moderate the negative effects of exposure to risk" (1999, p. 8), their research indicates that "it may be difficult to create and sustain high levels of assets or protection in the highest risk environments unless efforts also seek to reduce overall risk exposure as well" (1999, p. 8).

Second, the way in which the Search Institute collected its data has been brought into question by Price and Drake (1999). They state that it is impossible to generalize the results of the Search Institute's research to all youth because the data were derived from subjects mainly in the Midwest who lived in largely white communities with populations of less than 27 000 people. The communities were self-selected which they believe meant that those communities had a greater interest in youth, which should have increased the number of assets in youth. The fact that the opposite was true (the number of assets among youth in the surveys averaged less than 20 of the 40 developmental assets) "implies that other important assets may be missing from the instruments" (Price

& Drake, 1999, p. 2). Price and Drake also question the stability/reliability of the Institute's survey that has 156 items and that to date there has been no published longitudinal or follow-up study that demonstrates that changing assets in youth makes them less likely to be at risk (1999).

A third concern with developmental assets involves the actual number of assets. Originally, the Search Institute had suggested that there were 30 assets important to positive youth development. Later, this number changed to 40 assets with 31 assets being deemed the desirable number for young people to attain. However, why the desired number of assets is 31 is never stated and which of the 40 assets are most desirable is not clear (Howard & Dryden, 1999).

The fact that some of the recommended assets are very specific (e.g. three hours a week in creative activities; a B grade in school) is a fourth concern since there does not seem to be any data that support this type of specificity. Although having a B average or better (asset #22), doing one or more hours of homework per day (asset # 23) and reading for pleasure for three or more hours per week (asset #25) are seen, by the Search Institute, as necessary assets, these assets need to be viewed with caution. Many youth that are average or "C" students do very well in technical or trade courses while in school and/or excel at college or university courses when they are young adults. While doing homework on a daily basis may help youth establish routines, it will only help enhance students' academic skills if they understood the information while it was being taught in school. Finally, while reading 3 hours a week for pleasure may seem normal for some people, it does not mean that all cultures or socio-econmonic groups put the same emphasis on reading.

A fifth concern examines how relevant some of the assets are to different cultures and socioeconomic status. Howard and Dryden write:

> They appear to represent the values and aspirations of one particular social group and while all families probably wish their young to thrive, the fact that this may be achieved in different ways is overlooked. The emphasis on school success is an example of how what is considered to be unquestionably a social good by one group can be a source of deep anxiety for another. For individuals in some social groups which have not traditionally enjoyed high rates of educational success, this developmental asset may carry with it the fear or threat of social ostracism and loss of identity (1999, p. 8).

A sixth concern with the asset developmental framework is the attempt to decree and categorize specific protective factors that may not actually encompass all of the protective factors for youth (Howard & Dryden, 1999). This concern leads to a seventh and final concern that even Scales, who is a Senior Fellow at the Search Institute, appears unsure how to address. The question of how the assets relate to each other has, at this time, not been satisfactorily resolved (Scales, 1999b).

It is clear that more research about the 40 developmental assets and the asset development framework and how it can be used to enhance positive youth development needs to be completed. Scales (1999b) states:

> The developmental asset framework is a research-based theory that we continually test. Like any other theory, the asset framework should not be immune to testing, criticism and revision as the emerging research dictates. This process is at the

> heart of credible social science, and we are committed to taking it where it leads (p. 14).

With that in my mind, the researcher believes that conducting this type of research focuses on how parents, peers, schools and communities can enhance strengths in youth so that youth will be seen as valuable resources who have the capacity to grow and change both internally and within their environment.

Conclusion

Youth today are often viewed by the media and adult members of society from a negative perspective (Bibby, 2001; Scales & Leffert, 1999). Using a risk-based framework tends to emphasizes what is wrong with youth and provides few solutions to reducing risk behaviors (Brendtro, et al, 1998). Programs such as smoking prevention and abstinence only that have been developed using this approach tend to be ineffective (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Often youth are seen as merely passive participants in these types of programs that are usually adult developed and adult run (Osher, 1996).

As early as the 1920s however, there were people who worked with youth who focused on the strengths that they saw in these youth, rather than the deficits. In the 1950s, some researchers and practitioners started to shift their focus from what was wrong with youth to what factors facilitated youth to cope with adversity. This concept was called resiliency but it would take another three decades before this theory became operationalized.

One of the aspects of resiliency is that of protective factors which fall into three basic categories: individual characteristics, social bonding, and healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior. Using these categories as a starting platform, the Search Institute

standards for behavior. Using these categories as a starting platform, the Search Institute expanded them into eight categories, four of which were labeled external assets and four, internal assets. Within each category, the Search Institute had a certain number of assets, with 20 assets viewed as internal protective factors and 20 as external protective factors. Their assumption is that the more assets youth have, the easier it is for them to cope with difficulties that may arise in their lives. It is important to remember however, that one framework seldom answers all questions about youth. Although the idea of focusing on the strengths of youth is a step forward in promoting positive youth development, more research needs to be done to clarify some aspects of this approach.

Chapter 3

Methods

Study Setting and Sample

The setting for this research project was a small rural Alberta town located northwest of Edmonton, Alberta. The main industries in the area are farming, oil and gas and forestry. The town, which has a population of 1,500, serves as a center for the local farming community and has a variety of amenities including a hospital, grocery and hardware stores, drugstore, hair salons and two schools. Approximately 450 students attend the two schools with 65 grade 6 students in the elementary school and 377 students in grades 7-12 at the high school. Many of the youth who attend the schools live outside of the town.

All students who attended grades 6 through 12 in one of the two schools were eligible to be involved in the study. Three arguments supported the goal of trying to recruit all students from these grades into the study, rather than obtaining a smaller sample. First, in a small rural area parents may have been more reluctant to have their children singled out for a study. Conversely, parents may also have questioned why their children were not asked to be part of the study and felt that they were left out of something important. Second, by surveying as many of the youth as possible, youth from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, type of parent family, and school and community interaction were included in the research. Third, acceptance of the results of the study to community and parent groups may be increased if they knew that the study targeted the entire population of grade 6-12 students, rather than just a sample.

Survey Instrument

The instrument employed in this research study was a quantitative questionnaire developed by the researcher that asked youth between the ages of 12 to 18 a series of 124 questions about their attitudes, beliefs and strengths. It was entitled," The Strengths of (name of town) Youth Survey" (Appendix 1). Of the 124 questions asked in this survey, 28 questions were taken, with permission, from the Search Institute Profile of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors (Search Institute, 1997). These questions were used in this study because they asked youth information that the researcher wanted to know about their beliefs, time spent helping others, and their relationship with their parents, school and other adults. Other questions from that same survey were modified and adapted for the "Strengths of (name of town) Youth Survey". The researcher also talked to a number of key stakeholders who work with youth about the type of questions that should be asked in the survey. The key stakeholders included personnel from Family Community Services, Children Services, McMann Youth Services, as well as a few teachers and parents. The new questions that were used in this survey focused on various aspects of youth that the researcher wanted to explore in greater depth. For example, there were very few questions in the Search Institute's survey about peers and no questions about siblings. Therefore, the researcher developed questions about peers and siblings to examine the relationship between peers and siblings in youths' lives. The researcher also developed additional questions about school, community, youth programs, homework, responsibility, safety and values.

Dependent measures. The survey consisted of a self-report questionnaire that was divided into 6 sections. In each section, youth were asked to answer a series of questions

that assessed information about specific strengths. The majority of the statements (#5-10, 11-23, 25-31, 47-59, 61-79, 87-100, 111-121) used a Likert Scale to measure five possible responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Statements 32-45, which examined how youth spent their time, used an ordinal scale with six possible responses that ranged from no time to 11+ hours per week. Statements 101-104 had as possible responses very often, often, sometimes, seldom and never. A series of statements (105-110) that examined the influence of adults on healthy youth development used five responses ranging from none to more than three. There were a total of 109 statements that were designed to assess strengths.

Independent measures Questions three and four were independent variables in this study identifying gender and location. Questions one and two were interval measures that identified age and grade. Ordinal measures were used in questions 24, 60, 80-82, 85 and 86 to describe the respondent's value system, type of parent family, birth order and number of siblings, academic standing and amount of homework done per night. Statements 83 and 84 offered the respondent four choices from which to choose – yes, no, sometimes and do not have brother(s) and sister(s). Questions 46 and 122 used 21 determinants to indicate what strengths youth perceived in themselves and what strengths they believed others perceived in them. Finally, respondents were asked two open-ended questions (123 and 124).

Pilot test. The survey was piloted with approximately 1000 students from grades 6 to 12 in a different small rural town in Alberta. Three changes to the survey were made after the pilot was completed. The first change was made to statement 24. In the pilot, the statement read, "If something is against my values…" followed by three responses to

choose from. According to the administrators of the survey, some students, especially those in the lower grades were unsure of the meaning of values. Therefore, for the study town survey, the words were changed to "If I think it is wrong to do something…" followed by the previous three responses. As a result of the change to statement 24, the preface for statements 25-31 changed from " It is against my values for me to…" to " At my age, I think it is wrong for me to…" followed by 7 statements that the students could respond to. Statement 93 was changed from " I seldom skip school" to "I never or hardly ever skip school" because of concerns by students in the pilot study, especially those in lower grades, stating that they did not know how to answer the question because they never skipped school.

The pilot also provided information about how long, on average the survey took to complete. It was found that the majority of students completed the survey in less than 50 minutes. However, the principals of the schools involved in the study stated that additional time would be given to students if they needed it.

The final draft of the research proposal was approved by the University of Alberta Health Research Ethics committee. Individual parental consent was waived because of support in writing received from the two principals of the schools participating in the study. In addition, written support was provided by the two parent councils and community members. Information was distributed in the local newspaper, the school newsletters and in posters that were displayed throughout the community prior to the research being conducted. Requested revisions to the information letter and to posters were completed before the administration of the survey.

Survey Administration

On March 28, 2001, all grade 6 students attending the elementary school and all students in grade 7-12 attending the high school were given a Student Consent Form by staff from an AADAC office [1](Appendix 2) located in a different rural location. The students completed the surveys during regularly scheduled classes that were from 65-80 minutes in length. Grade 7, 8 and 9 classes completed the survey during the first class in the morning, grade 10 through 12 students completed it during the third class in the morning and grade 6 students completed the survey the first class after lunch.

In each class, the Student Consent Form[2] was read aloud, the students were told that there would be no penalty for withdrawing or refusing permission to participate and asked if there were any questions. Students who wanted to complete the survey signed the Student Consent Form, handed it in and picked up a survey. Students who chose not to complete the survey worked on their school work or read a book. After students completed the survey, they were asked to return it. The students were told that that if they had any questions or concerns after they completed the survey, they could contact Jan Robbins-Chant, the researcher, at the AADAC office in a different

1 The researcher is an Addictions Counselor with AADAC and requested the assistance of AADAC staff in implementing the survey. Since the researcher knew some of the students, she chose to not be a part of the data collection.

2 Students Giving Consent: The reasons for requesting that youth be allowed to give consent, instead of their parents were: Youth may have found that by completing the survey it helped them recognize to some degree the positives that were in their lives. Asking youth to check off what they perceived to be strengths in themselves was seen as a possible empowering process to help youth focus on their positive capabilities. Youth who did not obtain parental consent from their parents would miss this opportunity. Youth who had trouble remembering to take letters, such as those requesting parental consent, home would not have a voice in how they perceived the positives in their lives. Youth, whose parents whom, for a multitude of reasons did not receive nor read the parental consent letter, would not be given a voice.

small rural town through the Government RITE line (310-0000) or talk with their school counselor or principal. Three hundred and ten students out of 442 (70%) completed the survey with 305 (69%) providing complete data for the researcher.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The first step was to describe the sample. Next, factor analysis was performed on the 109 statements assessing strengths, in order to simplify the number of dependent variables used. The third step was to examine the factors for themes, name them and put them in categories with similar themes. Finally, the factors (dependent variables) in each category were analyzed with regard to the research questions guiding the study.

Description of the Sample

Table 1 provides a descriptive summary of the sample (N=305). Of the 442 students attending grades 6 through 12 in the study town, 305 (69%) chose to sign the Student Consent Form and complete The Strengths of (name of town) Youth Survey. The median age of the respondents as well as the mean was 14.0 (SD 2.1) years of age. Since there was only one student who was 19 years of age, the student was included in the 18-year-old group when analyzing the data. The mean grade was 8.6 (SD 2.0) and the median was grade 9.0. Forty-three percent of the 305 students lived on a farm, 37.2% for town and 19.8% on acreages. Forty-eight point three percent of the students were male and 51.7 % were female.

Table 1

Number of Students for Each Grade

Grade	Number of Respondents	Total Students for each Grade	Percentage of Total Students
6	62	65	95%
7	47	56	84%
8	41	54	76%
9	47	68	69%

10	43	63	68%
11	35	62	56%
12	30	74	41%
Total	305	442	69%

Since some of the grades had low numbers, the grades were grouped together (6-7, 8-9. 10-12) for statistical purposes to ensure that n = 30. Therefore, grade 6-7 had 109 students, grade 8-9 had 88 students and grade 10-12 had 108 students. Academic averages were also grouped together because only 7 students self-reported that they had less than a 50% average. As a result, the classifications for academic averages were <65%, 65-79% and 80-100%.

Factor Analysis

Five factor analyses were performed for this study. As shown in Table 2, the statements that used the scale strongly agree to strongly disagree were factored together as were the statements that used the scale not important to extremely important (Table 3) The statements that used the scale of hours per week (Table 4) were also factored together. In statements 46 (Table 5) and 122 (Table 6) youth were asked to read through 21 strengths that are viewed as important for positive youth development (Benard, 1991; Engle, et al, 1996; Leffert, et al, 1997; Search Institute, 2000). They were asked to check off strengths that they perceived in themselves (statement 46) or that they thought others might see in them (statement 122). In the factor analysis, these 21 strengths were factored together for each statement. Some of the statements such as those about siblings, the number of adults youth knew whom they felt close to and the role parents play in their children's schooling used different scales. However, in each case, there were too few statements to complete a factor analysis on them so they each were named and eventually put in a category that had the same theme.

An exploratory factor analysis of the aforementioned statements was conducted using the principal components method for extraction with varimax rotation. Factors were extracted using eigenvalues equal to 1 as the criteria. Once the number of factors suggested was found through the total variance and the scree plot diagram, principal axis factoring extraction was completed with both varimax and direct oblimin rotation, delta 0, for the different scales. Two statements did not have sufficient loading (=. 3) with any one factor and were discarded as shown in Table 2. When statements shared loadings on more than one factor, generally the highest values were used to determine where the factor fit. However, on occasion, if the statement appeared to fit conceptually within another factor despite a lower loading, the researcher made the decision to put the statement within that factor. Tables 2-6 illustrate how the factors were loaded using either the varimax or direct oblimin, delta 0, rotation.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Statements with Scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
5. I am glad I am me.												0.512
6. I am a responsible person.										0.344		
7. I feel happy most of the time.												0.573
8. I have control over things that happen to me in my life.												0.493
9. When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things better.												0.512
10. When I am an adult, I am sure I will have a good life.												0.560
25. At my age, it is wrong for me to drink alcohol.											0.589	
26. At my age, it is wrong for me to use drugs.											0.852	
27. At my age, it is wrong for me to smoke cigarettes.											0.812	
28. At my age, it is wrong for me to gamble.											0.697	
29. At my age, it is wrong for me to have sex.											0.551	
30. At my age, it is wrong for me to lie or cheat.											0.731	

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
47. My friends think I am a responsible person.										0.475		
~~48. I can trust my friends.~~(<.300)												
49. My friends think it is wrong for teen-agers to physically fight with each other.				0.324								
50. My friends think my parents are okay.	0.476											
51. I would talk to my friends if I wanted to know more about drugs, alcohol or sex.			0.518									
52. I can talk to my friends if something is bothering me.			0.768									
53. My friends talk to me about things that concern them.			0.629									
54. My friends are more important to me than my parents.	0.385											
55. I feel safe with my friends.			0.707									
56. My friends think it is okay Not to smoke cigarettes.							0.700					
57. My friends think it is okay Not to drink alcohol.							0.810					
58. My friends think it is okay Not to use drugs.							0.750					

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
59. My friends think it is okay Not to have sex.							0.570					
61. My parents think I am a responsible person.										0.321		
62. My parents can trust me.										0.300		
63. I know my parents care about me.	0.646											
64. I get along well with my parents.	0.729											
65. My parents give me help and support when I need it.	0.777											
66. My parents often tell me they love me.	0.690											
67. In my family, I feel useful and important.	0.640											
68. My parents encourage me to be the best I can be.					0.680							
69. In my family there are clear rules about what I can and can not do.					0.527							
70. I think it is okay for my parents to set rules even if sometimes I get mad at the rules.					0.450							
71. My parents want to know where I am going when I go out.					0.488							

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
72. My parents want to know who I am going with when I go out.					0.460							
73. If I break one of my parent's rules, there is usually some type of consequence.					0.500							
74. I have a lot of good conversations with my parents.	0.700											
75. I would talk to my parents if I wanted to know more about sex, drugs or alcohol.	0.482											
76. I can talk to my parents if something is bothering me.	0.678											
77. My parents spend a lot of time helping other people.	0.425											
78. My parents think my friends are okay.	0.443											
79. I feel safe at home.	0.510											
87. At school, I try as hard as I can to do my best work.									0.496			
88. I respect my teachers.									0.682			
89. My teachers respect me.									0.743			
90. My teachers think I am a responsible person.									0.759			

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
91. Teachers at school encourage me to be the best I can be.								0.630				
92. I understand what is taught in school so I can do the homework.									0.420			
93. I never or hardly ever skip school.									0.421			
94. In my school there are clear rules about what students can and can not do.								0.370				
95. I care about my school.				0.610								
~~96. At my school, everyone knows that they are not allowed to smoke cigarettes, use drugs or drink alcohol.~~(<.300)												
97. Students in my school care about me.								0.450				
98. Students are punished if they break the rules.								0.360				
99. Students help decide what goes on in my school.				0.341								
100. I feel safe at school.				0.404								
111. Adults who live in the study town care about teenagers living in the study town.		0.623										

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
112. Adults who live in the study town are good role models for teenagers.		0.626										
113. Adults who live in the study town try to make the study town safe for teenagers.		0.584										
114. Adults who live in the study town think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol.						0.847						
115. Adults who live in the study town think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol.						0.763						
116. Adults who live in the study town think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol.						0.846						
117. Adults who live in the study town think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol.						0.734						
118. Adults who live in the study town think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol.						0.678						

Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
119. Adults who live in the study town like doing activities with teenagers.		0.682										
120. Adults who live in the study town think teenagers are responsible people.		0.713										
121. Adults who live in the study town see the good in teenagers.		0.710										
Eigenvalue	13.66	5.56	4.33	3.39	2.80	2.48	2.27	1.95	1.61	1.49	1.38	1.32
% of total variance	19.51	7.94	6.19	4.84	4.00	3.54	3.25	2.79	2.30	2.13	1.97	1.88

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 3

Factor Analysis of Statements Using the Scale None to 11+ Hours per Week

Statements During an average week, how much time do you spend …	F1	F2
32. Doing some type of physical activity	0.318	
33. Playing on a sports team at school	0.783	
34. Playing on a sports team in the community	0.775	
35. Helping with sports teams at school	0.727	
36. Helping with sports teams in the community	0.592	
37. In clubs or organizations at school		0.405
38. In clubs or organizations outside of school		0.497
39. Volunteering your time to help other people		0.482
40. Helping friends or neighbors		0.408
41. Being involved in religious activities or groups		0.300
42. Practicing or taking lessons in music, art, drama or dance after school		0.678
43. Being a leader in a group or organization		0.403
Eigenvalue	3.68	1.37
% of total variance	33.46	12.41

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 4

Factor Analysis of Statements Using the Scale Not Important to Extremely Important

Statements	F1	F2
11. Helping other people	0.564	
12. Helping to reduce poverty and hunger in Canada	0.754	
13. Helping to make the world a better place in which to live	0.817	
14. Being religious or spiritual	0.574	
15. Helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly	0.672	
16. Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am	0.580	
17. Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities)	0.624	
18. Giving time to make life better for others	0.774	
19. Giving money to make life better for others	0.755	
20. Doing what I believe is right, even when it is unpopular to do so		0.304
21. Telling the truth even when it is not easy		0.507
22. Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake		0.921

23. Accepting responsibility for my actions even if I will get in trouble		0.814
Eigenvalue	4.31	1.15
% of total variance	53.90	14.38

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 5

Factor Analysis of Statement 46 Using Checkmarks to Answer Yes, Blank for No

Statements	F1	F2	F3
1. Respectful to myself and others	0.667		
2. Healthy	0.442		
3. Friendly	0.726		
4. Good at making and keeping friends	0.444		
5. Honest	0.678		
6. Caring	0.689		
7. Make choices that are good for me	0.399		
8. Leader		0.350	
9. Creative		0.394	
10. Sense of humor			0.448
11. Open-minded			0.502
12. Trusting	0.604		
13. Accepts Criticism			0.300
14. Positive Thinker		0.457	
15. Responsible	0.631		
16. Determined		0.526	
17. Intelligent		0.395	
18. Laid-back			0.406
19. Independent		0.421	
20. Role Model		0.571	
21. Athletic		0.300	
Eigenvalue	5.60	1.85	1.39
% of total variance	26.67	8.81	6.63

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 6

Factor Analysis of Statement 122 Using Checkmarks to Answer Yes, Blank for No

Statements	F1	F2	F3
1. Respectful to myself and others	0.634		
2. Healthy	0.477		
3. Friendly	0.651		
4. Good at making and keeping friends	0.475		
5. Honest	0.676		
6. Caring	0.699		
7. Make choices that are good for me		0.462	
8. Leader		0.539	
9. Creative			0.405
10. Sense of humor			0.495
11. Open-minded			0.458
12. Trusting	0.683		
13. Accepts Criticism			0.423
14. Positive Thinker		0.486	
15. Responsible	0.646		
16. Determined		0.417	
17. Intelligent		0.359	
18. Laid-back			0.543
19. Independent		0.404	
20. Role Model		0.612	
21. Athletic		0.300	
Eigenvalue	6.89	1.77	1.23
% of total variance	32.79	8.44	5.87

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

After the factor analysis was done, each factor was examined to determine the main theme. For example, in the factor analysis that used the scale strongly agree to strongly disagree, 12 factors were extracted. Upon examination of factor 1, it became clear that the main theme was about how youth felt about their family and how they thought their family felt about them. Therefore it was given the name family. This

exercise was repeated for each of the other 11 factors as well as for the factors extracted from the other factor analyses. As names were given to the factors, different themes evolved that linked various factors together. For example, the themes in factors 10, 11 and 12 were similar in the sense that they were about values that youth might have about themselves and others. As a result, these three factors were eventually put in a category called Beliefs and Values. Using the themes in the factors and then linking the common themes and putting them in categories (Appendix 3) allowed for the development of the following framework.

Description of the Framework

The framework that was developed was based on the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework but with some substantial differences. While the Search Institute had four external (how people affect youth) and four internal categories (how youth perceive themselves), the researcher decided, after examining the factor analyses, to develop a framework that used 3 external and 3 internal categories. The main reasons for this decision was due to the different emphasis than the Search Institute in some areas such as family and strengths and as a result of combining some of the topics presented by the Institute. The external categories were called Connecting, Rules and Expectations and Involvement with the internal categories being Desire to Learn, Beliefs and Values and Recognizing Strengths. The total number of statements used for the external category was 68 with 35 in the Connecting category (6 factors), 19 in Rules and Expectations (4 factors) and 12 in Involvement (2 factors). The internal categories used a total of 81 statements with 10 in Desire to Learn (2 factors), 29 in Beliefs and Values (5 factors) and 42 in Recognizing Strengths (6 factors).

The category Connections examined relationships or connections that youth might have with their family, siblings, adults, peers and school. In the factor family connections, youth were asked to state how well they got along with their parents, whether they would talk with their parents if something was bothering them, how they thought their parents felt about their friends, how important their parents were and if they knew their parents cared about them. Youth were also asked how they felt about their siblings and how they thought their siblings felt about them (sibling connections). Two factors in the Connection category examined the relationships between youth and adults. In the factor adult connections, youth were asked to state how they perceived what adults thought about youth in the study town and teenagers in general. In adult connections 2, youth were asked to answer six statements about how many adults they knew that they could rely on. Peer connections, the fifth factor in the Connections category, asked youth if they felt safe with their friends and if they would talk to them if something was bothering them. The final factor in this category, school connections, examined whether youth felt safe at school and if they felt they played a role in deciding what went on at their school.

The Rules and Expectations category had four factors that examined some of the rules and expectations of family, adults, peers and school. In the factor family rules and expectations, the majority of the statements had to do with rules within the family. The factor adult expectations examined only one segment of expectations that adults might have about youth. These five statements determined whether youth thought adults felt it was wrong for teenagers to drink, smoke, do drugs, gamble or have sex. Peer expectations also looked only at one segment of many expectations about their peers.

Like adult expectations, these statements were related to whether friends thought it was okay if their peers did not smoke, drink alcohol, do drugs or have sex. School connections, the fourth factor asked youth how they thought other students and teachers in their schools felt about them as well as whether there were clear rules and consequences.

The category Involvement had two factors. In both cases, youth were asked to state how much time they spent in a week doing certain activities. The first factor physical activities asked youth about whether they did physical activity, played on sports teams or helped out with sports teams. The second factor examined how much time youth spent in structured activities such as clubs or organizations or in unstructured activities such as helping friends and neighbors.

Desire to Learn was the first of the internal categories. It had two factors called making it work at school and parental involvement in school. The first factor examined how youth felt about their teachers, how hard they worked in school, and whether they understood what was taught in school so they could do the homework. The second factor investigated the role that parents played in their schooling.

The category Beliefs and Values had five factors. The first two factors used the scale not important to extremely important while the last three factors used the scale strongly agree to strongly disagree. The first factor, equality and justice asked youth to express their beliefs about the importance of helping others, making the world a better place, and speaking up for equality. The second factor, integrity focused on topics such as telling the truth and accepting responsibility for one's actions. The third factor, responsibility and trust asked youth if they thought they were responsible and if they

believed their parents and friends thought they were responsible. As well, they were asked if they thought their parents could trust them. Resistance skills and restraint was the fourth factor and asked youth if they thought it was wrong for them at their present age to drink, use drugs, smoke, gamble, have sex, lie or cheat or steal or shoplift. The final factor, personal power asked youth questions about how they felt about themselves, whether they had control over their lives and whether the future looked positive.

The last internal category called Recognizing Strengths had six factors that were divided into strengths one sees in oneself and strengths one thinks others see in oneself. The factors interpersonal competence in self and interpersonal competence others see in self had strengths such as healthy, friendly, honest and good at making and keeping friends. The factors leadership qualities in self and leadership qualities others see in self had strengths such as leader, role model and intelligent. Strengths such as sense of humor and open-minded were found in the final two factors, personal flexibility in self and personal flexibility others see in self.

Validity and Reliability

Two types of validity were addressed in this study. First, content validity in the form of face validity that explored whether the right things were being measured and second, construct validity that examined whether the scope of a particular concept was being measured so that its essential quality was obtained. Research (Benard, 1995; Bibby, 2001; McCreary Institute, 1999) indicated that the factors measured in this study were important in healthy youth development thus satisfying the definition of content validity. Factor analysis of the 111 items indicated that they all fit (except for 2) within 25 factors and 6 categories. Each factor focused on one specific part of a concept while

the categories defined the concept across multiple contexts. For example, family connections measured the connection between youth and their families while the category Connections measured the dimensions of youths' connections with their siblings, other adults, peers and school. Combined, the category Connections and the six factors within the category explained the majority of relationships that are important in youths' lives. Thus the issue of construct validity was satisfied.

Once the factor analysis was completed the factors were tested for reliability as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Reliability of Factors

Factor Scale	Number of Statements	Reliability Coefficient
1. Family Connections	13	.87
2. Sibling Connections	2	.78
3. Adults Connections	6	.86
4. Adult Connections 2	6	.85
5. Peer Connections	4	.74
6. School Connections	4	.69
7. Family Rules and Expectations	6	.77
8. Adult Expectations	5	.90
9. Peer Expectations	4	.84
10. School Rules and Expectations	4	.63
11. Physical Activity	5	.79
12. Structured and Unstructured Activity	7	.75
13. Making it Work at School	6	.81
14. Parental Involvement in School	4	.81
15. Equality and Social Justice	9	.90
16. Integrity	4	.79
17. Responsibility and Trust	4	.75
18. Resistance Skills and Restraint	7	.89
19. Personal Power	5	.73
20. Interpersonal Competence in Self	9	.85
21. Leadership Qualities in Self	8	.70
22. Personal Flexibility in Self	4	.50
23. Interpersonal Competence Others See in Self	8	.86

24. Leadership Qualities Others See in Self	8	.78
25. Personal Flexibility Others See in Self	5	.66

Note. N=305 Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess reliability.

Ninety-six percent of the factors had alpha reliabilities in the .60s - .80s. Reliability coefficients on factors of less than .80 could be improved by increasing the number of statements for each factor, ensuring the statements were measuring the same thing and that the statements were well written and easily understood (Crocker and Algina, 1986). After testing for reliability, a score for each factor was computed. For example, the factor, family connections was based on a five point scale with 1 being strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – unsure, 4 – agree and 5 strongly agree. There were 13 statements for this factor so the minimum score was 13 while the maximum score was 65. Frequencies were run to determine missing values, mean, variance, standard deviation and the minimum and maximum scores achieved for each factor.

The largest number of missing values was found for the factor, adult connections 2 with 18 out of 305 or 6% of the total responses missing. After examining different options for handling missing values, the researcher decided to replace missing values with the series mean. According to Tabachnick (1996) "the mean for the distribution as a whole does not change and the researcher is not required to guess at missing values" (p. 63). The disadvantage to replacing the missing values with the mean is that the variance of the variable is reduced. After dealing with the issue of missing values, frequencies were run once again to ensure the missing values had been replaced and there was minimal difference for the means (Appendix 4).

Research Question 1 – What Percentage of Youth Experience the 25 External and Internal Factors?

Descriptive Statistics of the 12 External Factors

Percentages of youth experiencing the 12 external factors are presented in Table 8. In this case, experiencing means strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statements within each factor. The percentage was calculated by first finding the percentage of students who strongly agreed and agreed with each statement in a factor. Next, those percentages were added to the percentages of the other statements in the factor and then divided by the number of statements in each factor. For example, in the factor family connections, the percentages of students who strongly agreed or agreed with each individual statement were added together and then divided by 13. This result was used to determine the percentage of youth experiencing each factor.

In the category, Connections, approximately 70% of youth agreed with the statements in the factors family connections, sibling connections and peer connections. Just over 60% of youth agreed with the statements in the factor adult connections 2 (3 + adults) while 54% agreed with statements in the factor school connections and 42% agreed with statements made in the factor adult connections. For the Rules and Expectations category, 80% of youth agreed with the statements in the family rules and expectations factor. Approximately two-thirds of youth agreed with the statements in the two factors peer expectations and school rules and expectations. For the factor adult expectations, 57% of youth agreed with the statements. For the third category, Involvement, approximately one-third of youth stated that they were involved in some type of physical activity or helping out sports team for 3 or more hours per week. Just

under one-quarter of youth stated that they were involved in more than 3 hours of structured and unstructured activities per week.

Table 8

Percentage of Youth Experiencing Each Factor for External Categories

External Category	Factor	Number of Statements for Each Factor	Total Students	Mean (SD)
Connections	Family	13	73%	50.06 (7.83)
	Sibling	2	68%	3.23 (1.69)
	Adult	6	42%	20.00 (4.90)
	Adult 2 (3+ adults)	6	62%	16.92 (5.77)
	Peer	4	73%	15.83 (3.34)
	School	4	54%	13.53 (3.42)
Rules and Expectations	Family	6	80%	25.01 (4.05)
	Adult	5	57%	18.21 (5.16)
	Peer	4	66%	15.26 (4.41)
	School	4	66%	15.33 (2.76)
Involvement (3+ hours per week)	Physical Activity	5	34%	8.19 (5.77)
	Structured and Unstructured Activity	7	22%	8.44 (6.28)

Descriptive Statistics of the 13 Internal Factors.

Percentages of youth experiencing the 13 internal factors are presented in Table 9. For the category, Desire to Learn, 70% of youth agreed with the statements in the factor making it work while just over 60% stated that their parents were involved in some aspects of their schooling (factor – parental involvement in school). For the Beliefs and Values category, 84% of youth agreed with the statements found in the factor responsibility and trust; approximately three-quarters of them agreed with the statements in the factors integrity and personal power; and just over 50% agreed with statements made in the two factors, equality and justice as well as resistance skills and restraint. For

the category, Recognizing Strengths, over 80% of youth checked off strengths associated with the factors interpersonal competence in self and interpersonal competence others see in self. Approximately two-thirds of students checked off the strengths found in the following four factors: leadership qualities in self, personal flexibility in self, leadership qualities others see in self and personal flexibility others see in self.

Table 9

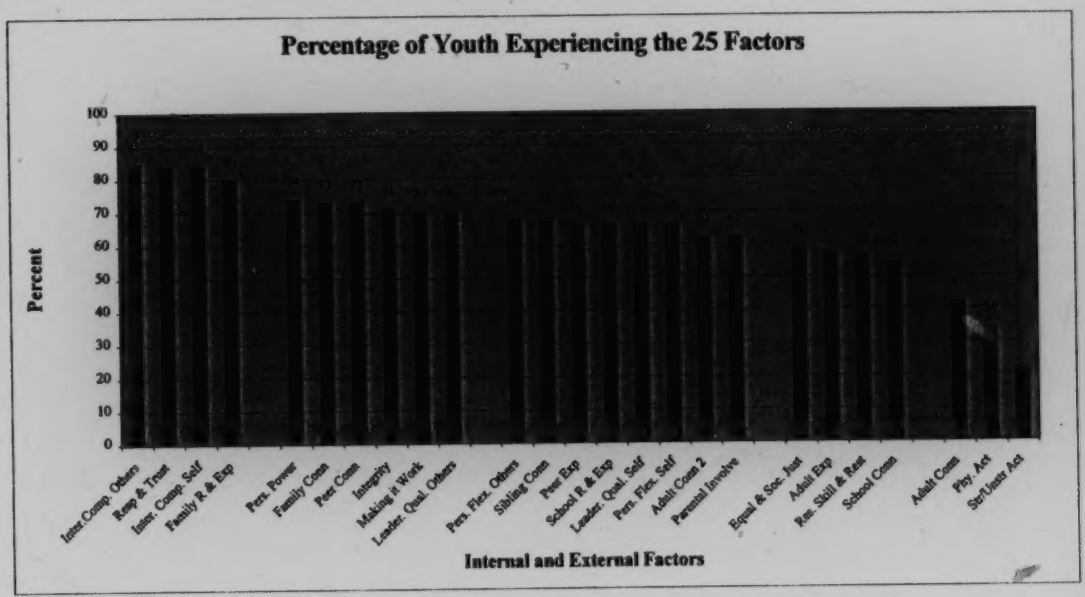
Percentage of Youth Experiencing Each Factor for Internal Categories

Internal Category	Factor	Number of Statement for Each Factor	Total Students	Mean (SD)
Desire to Learn	Making it Work	6	70%	23.34 (4.42)
	Parental Involvement in School	4	62%	14.88 (3.74)
Beliefs and Values	Equality and Social Justice	9	58%	31.36 (7.79)
	Integrity	4	71%	15.39 (3.51)
	Responsibility and Trust	4	84%	16.51 (2.38)
	Resistance Skills and Restraint	7	56%	24.39 (8.07)
	Personal Power	5	74%	19.70 (2.95)
Recognizing Strengths	Interpersonal Competence in Self	9	84%	7.67 (2.08)
	Leadership Qualities in Self	8	66%	5.28 (2.10)
	Personal Flexibility in Self	4	66%	2.67 (1.10)
	Interpersonal Competence Others see in Self	8	85%	6.86 (1.95)
	Leadership Qualities Others see in Self	8	70%	5.57 (2.21)
	Personal Flexibility Others see in Self	5	68%	3.43 (1.43)

The question of how many of the 25 external and internal factors youth experience is illustrated in Figure 1. Four of the factors were experienced by 80% or more of the youth, six factors by 70-79% of youth, eight factors by 60-69% of youth, four factors by 50-59% of youth and 3 factors by less than 50% of the youth.

Figure 1

Percentage of Youth Experiencing the 25 Factors



Research Question 2: Relationships Between External Factors, Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

Introduction

Multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVA) were conducted on the three categories – Connections, Rules and Expectations and Involvement – using SPSS 10 and the Hummel and Sligo approach. Hummel and Sligo recommended a procedure that tested significance in two stages. For the first stage, the null hypothesis from a

multivariate result is examined. If it is rejected, the result is subjected to individual univariate ratios to determine where the significant meanings are found (Hummel & Sligo, 1971). Post Hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method that uses t-tests to perform pairwise comparisons between group means. The observed significance level was adjusted for the fact that multiple comparisons were being made. The level of significance for all cases was set at $p < .05$.

Connections

Introduction. The category Connections examined the responses of youth to statements in relation to family, siblings, adults in the community, peers and school. 74.0% of the youth who completed the survey stated that they lived with two biological parents, 11.6% lived with one parent and 12.3% lived with one parent and a stepparent. 1.7% of youth lived with relatives or guardians and 0.3% lived for a foster home. For birth order, 30.8% of the respondents stated that they were the youngest child in the family, 28.5% were the oldest, 3.6% stated that they were the only child in the family and 37.1% fit elsewhere in the birth order. Of the youth who had siblings, 25.6% of youth had no sisters, 42.6% had one sister and 31.8% had two or more sisters. In relation to male siblings, 26.9% had no brothers, 38.7% had one brother and 34.4% had 2 or more brothers.

The Effect of Gender, Grades, Location and Academic Achievement on Connections. As shown in Table 10, significant differences between gender were found for the factors adult connections 2, peer connections and school connections with females scoring higher than males in all of these factors. Among the grades, significant differences were found for family connections with grade 6 through 9 students scoring

higher than students in grades 10-12. For adult connections, all pairwise comparisons were significant with youth in grades 6-7 scoring higher than youth in grades 8-9 and youth in grades 6 through 9 scoring higher than youth in grades 10-12. Grades 8-9 students scored lower than students in grades 10-12 for peer connections while for school connections, youth in grade 6/7 scored higher than youth in the other grades. A significant difference in location was found for peer connections with youth who lived on acreages scoring higher than those who lived in town. Significant differences in academic achievement were found for adult connections where students with academic averages of less than 65% scored lower than students with an academic average of 80% or above. Students with averages of 65-79% scored lower than students with averages of 80-100% for the factor peer connections. Significant differences for academic achievement were also found for the factor school connections with students of averages of 80% or above scoring higher than youth with averages below 80%.

Table 10

Effects of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Connections

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Males	Females	
Family Connections	50.00_a	50.13_a	0.02
Sibling Connections	3.40_a	3.23_a	2.68
Adult Connections	20.03_a	19.97_a	0.01
Adult 2 Connections	16.17_a	17.61_b	4.73*
Peer Connections	14.42_a	17.16_b	60.51*
School Connections	12.83_a	14.19_b	12.28*

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Family Connections	51.26_a	50.82_a	47.99_b	5.62*
Sibling Connections	3.28_a	3.44_a	3.07_a	1.15
Adult Connections	21.84_a	19.86_b	18.03_c	17.81*
Adult 2 Connections	17.33_a	16.37_a	16.93_a	0.68
Peer Connections	15.68_a	15.21_{ab}	16.38_{ac}	3.10*
School Connections	14.58_a	13.33_b	12.55_b	10.32*

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Family Connections	50.12_a	49.18_a	50.39_a	0.47
Sibling Connections	3.07_a	3.39_a	3.38_a	1.12
Adult Connections	20.40_a	19.36_a	19.79_a	0.99
Adult 2 Connections	17.70_a	16.01_a	16.42_a	2.32
Peer Connections	15.81_{ab}	16.86_a	15.28_{bc}	4.47*
School Connections	13.66_a	13.12_a	13.56_a	0.52
Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Family Connections	51.03_a	48.79_a	51.20_a	3.22**
Sibling Connections	3.38_a	3.34_a	2.96_a	1.55
Adult Connections	19.10_a	19.63_{ab}	21.25_{bc}	4.02*
Adult 2 Connections	16.28_a	16.55_a	18.26_a	2.94
Peer Connections	15.46_a	15.48_{ab}	16.73_{ac}	4.12*
School Connections	12.35_a	12.82_a	15.58_b	24.19*

Note. Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

*$p < .05$

** Tests Between-Subjects Effects showed $p < .05$, Multiple Comparisons showed $p > .05$

Rules and Expectations

Introduction. In the Rules and Expectations Category, youth were asked to respond to statements about what other peoples' expectations of them were for certain areas. This was by no means a complete examination of this topic but rather a snapshot of some of the expectations they believed their parents, adults in the community, peers

and school expected of them.

The Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Rules and Expectations. As shown in Table 11, significant differences between gender were found for the factors family rules and expectations, adult expectations and peer expectations with females scoring higher than males in all three factors. Significant differences between grades were found for the factors adult expectations, peer expectations and school rules and expectations with students in grade 6/7 scoring higher than students in grades 8 through 12 for all three factors. There were no significant differences in location on any of the four factors. In academic achievement, significant differences were found for family rules and expectations with students in the 65-79% range scoring lower than students in the 80-100% range. For peer expectations, students with academic averages of less than 65% scored lower than students in the 80-100% range. For school rules and expectations youth with averages of 80% or higher scored higher than youth with averages below 80%.

Table 11

Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Rules and Expectations

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Male	Female	
Family Rules and Expectations	24.28_a	25.68_b	9.22*
Adult Expectations	17.34_a	19.02_b	8.16*
Peer Expectations	14.56_a	15.91_b	7.15*
School Expectations	15.06_a	15.58_a	2.70

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Family Rules and Expectations	25.44_a	25.00_a	24.43_a	1.70
Adult Expectations	19.69_a	17.36_b	17.20_{bc}	8.00*
Peer Expectations	16.84_a	14.32_b	14.26_{bc}	12.60*
School Expectations	16.27_a	14.92_b	14.64_{bc}	11.41*

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Family Rules and Expectations	25.04_a	24.86_a	25.03_a	0.04
Adult Expectations	18.47_a	17.29_a	18.25_a	1.07
Peer Expectations	15.58_a	15.51_a	14.63_a	1.52
School Expectations	15.72_a	14.71_a	15.19_a	2.86

Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Family Rules and Expectations	24.81_{ab}	24.37_a	26.10_{bc}	4.84*
Adult Expectations	17.30_a	17.92_a	19.34_a	3.15**
Peer Expectations	13.69_a	15.14_{ab}	16.46_{bc}	7.37*
School Expectations	14.81_a	14.83_a	16.57_b	12.33*

Note. Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

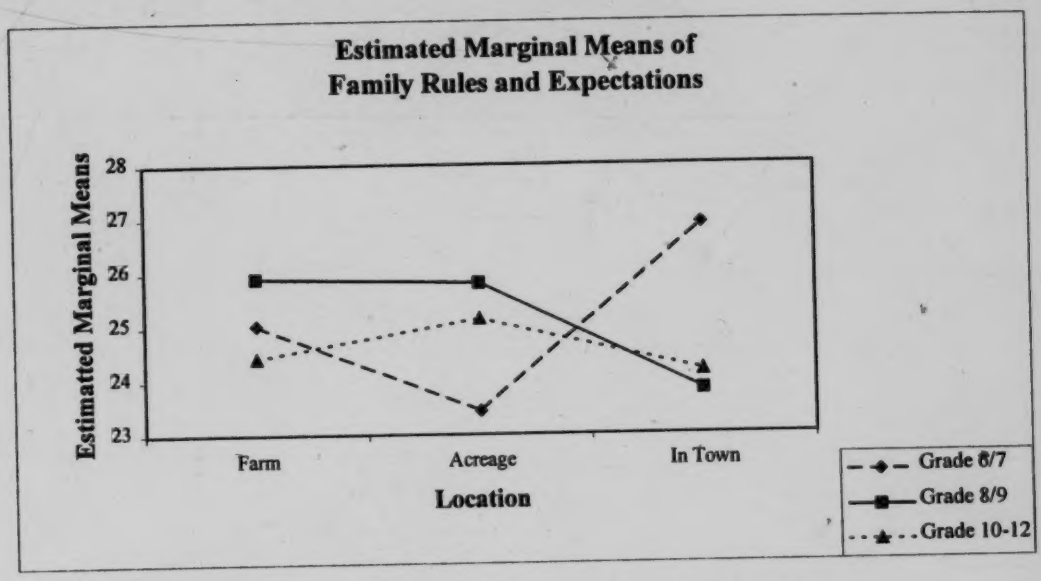
*$p < .05$

** Tests Between-Subjects Effects showed $p < .05$, Multiple Comparisons showed $p > .05$.

While doing the MANOVAs, an exploratory analysis also examined whether there were any significant interaction effects between the independent variables. Three interactions occurred in the Rules and Expectations category. A significant interaction effect (Figure 2) occurred for family rules and expectations [$F(4, 289) = 4.005$, $p < .05$]. Youth who lived in town and were in grade 6/7 scored higher than youth who lived on acreages or in farms. However, youth who were in grade 8/9 and lived on farms or acreages scored higher than youth in the same grade who lived in town.

Figure 2

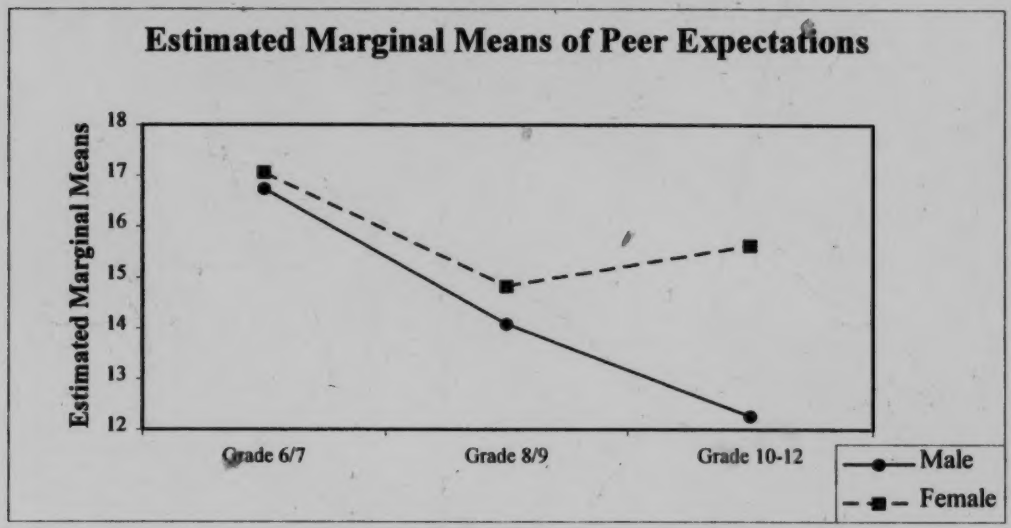
Interaction of Family Rules and Expectations in Grade by Location



A significant difference in interaction (Figure 3) was also found for peer expectations [$F(2, 294) = 4.06$, $p < .05$] in gender by grade. Female youth in grades 10/12 scored higher than male youth in grades 10/12 indicating that their peers thought it was okay if they did not smoke, drink, do drugs or have sex.

Figure 3

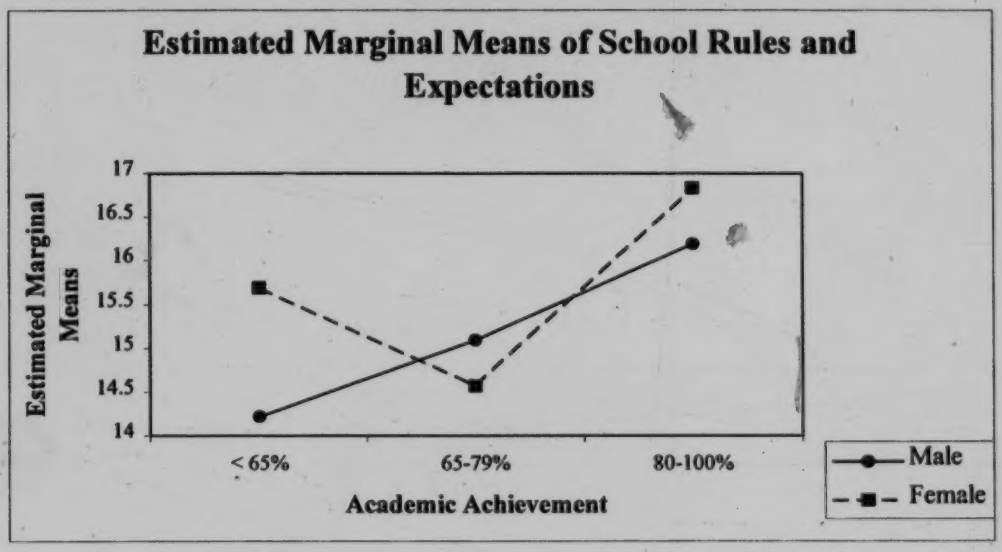
Rules and Expectations: Interaction for Peer Expectations in Gender by Grade



A third significant difference in interaction (Figure 4) was school rules and expectations [$F(2, 284) = 3.42$, $p < .05$] with males and females in the 65-79% range scoring lower than males and females in the 80-100% range. As males' academic averages increased so did their scores for the factor school rules and expectations. However, for females, scores decreased as academic achievement increased from <65% to 65-79% and then increased as academic grades increased to 80-100%.

Figure 4

Interaction of School Rules and Expectations in Gender by Academic Achievement



Involvement

Introduction. The category Involvement examined how youth spend their leisure time at school, home and for the community. Although, youth could check off one of six amounts of time ranging from none to more than 11 hours per week, for the purpose of this study, three or more hours per week was used as the benchmark. When examining what youth did during their leisure time, they were asked how much time was spent watching television/movies or on the Internet or computer. Sixty percent of youth stated that they spent 3 or more hours per week doing these activities. There were no significant differences between gender, grade level, location or academic achievement. It would be interesting to research the effects of watching television/movies or being on the Internet/computer to determine if engaging in these activities influenced youth.

The Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Involvement. Table 12 indicates that there were no significant differences in gender, grade, or location for either of the two factors in the Involvement category. However, significant differences in academic achievement were found for the factors physical activity with students having academic averages of less than 65% scoring lower than students with 80-100% averages. For structured and unstructured activities, students with less than an 80% average scored lower than students with an average of 80% or higher.

Table 12

Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Involvement

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Male	Female	
Physical Activity	8.81_a	7.61_a	3.26
Structured and Unstructured Activity	7.85_a	8.98_a	2.44

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Physical Activity	8.84_a	8.42_a	7.27_a	2.19
Structured and Unstructured Activity	9.31_a	8.96_a	7.44_a	2.66

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Physical Activity	8.42_a	7.07_a	8.40_a	1.28
Structured and Unstructured Activity	8.92_a	7.04_a	8.87_a	2.01

Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Physical Activity	6.76_a	7.90_{ab}	9.69_{bc}	5.19*
Structured and Unstructured Activity	7.65_a	8.07_a	10.25_b	3.97*

Note. Judgements were made on 6 point scales (0 = none, 5 = 11 or more hours per week). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method. *$p < .05$

Research Question 3: Relationships Between Internal Factors, Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

Introduction

Multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVA) were conducted on the three categories – Desire to Learn, Beliefs and Values and Recognizing Strengths – using SPSS 10 and the Hummel and Sligo approach. Hummel and Sligo recommended a procedure that tested significance for two stages. For the first stage, the null hypothesis from a multivariate result is examined. If it is rejected, the result is subjected to individual univariate ratios to determine where the significant meanings are found (Hummel & Sligo, 1971). Post Hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method that uses t-tests to perform pairwise comparisons between group means. The observed significance level was adjusted for the fact that multiple comparisons were being made. The level of significance for all cases was set at $p < .05$.

Desire to Learn: Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

The category, Desire to Learn examined two topics. First, for the factor, making it work at school, youth were asked to respond to statements about their commitment to school and their relationship with their teachers. Secondly, four statements were given to youth that asked about their parents' involvement in their schooling. When youth were asked to self-report what their academic averages were on average, 22.3% of youth stated that they had an academic average of less than 65%, 47.2% had an average of 65-79% and 30.5% had an average of 80-100%. When youth were asked about how much time they spent on average per night doing homework, 6.9% stated they did none, 40.3% did less than one hour, 44.6% did one to two hours and 8.2% did more than two hours per

night. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.01$) for the amount of homework that youth did per night in relation to gender with males spending less time doing homework than females. There was no significant difference ($p = 0.15$) for the amount of homework done in relation to grade level. There was also no significant difference ($p = 0.08$) for the amount of homework done per night and the youth's academic averages.

Significant differences (Table 13) between gender were found for the factor making it work at school with females scoring higher than males. Among the grades, significant differences were found for making it work at school with grade 6/7 students scoring higher than students in grades 8 to 12. For parental involvement in school all pairwise comparisons were significant with students in grades 10 through 12 scoring lower than students in grades 6 through 9 and youth in grades 8/9 scoring lower than youth in grades 6/7. There were no significant differences in location for either of the two factors in this category. Significant differences for academic achievement were found for the factors making it work at school and parental involvement in school. All pairwise comparisons were significant for making it work at school with students with averages below 65% scoring lower than students with averages 65% or higher and students with averages of 65-79% scoring lower than students with averages of 80-100%. For parental involvement in school, students with academic averages of 80-100% scored higher than students with averages below 80%.

Table 13

Effects of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Desire to Learn

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Male	Female	
Making it Work at School[1]	22.70_a	23.94_b	6.01*
Parental Involvement in School[2]	14.97_a	14.79_a	0.17

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Making it Work at School	24.62_a	22.91_b	22.28_{bc}	8.52*
Parental Involvement in School	16.50_a	15.25_b	12.90_c	31.18*

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Making it Work at School	23.95_a	22.93_a	22.89_a	2.08
Parental Involvement in School	15.23_a	14.80_a	14.51	1.12

Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Making it Work at School	20.75_a	22.75_b	26.32_c	38.62*
Parental Involvement in School	14.65_a	14.15_a	16.25_b	8.53*

Note. [1]Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

[2]Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = very often). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

*$p < .05$

Beliefs and Values: Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

The fifth category, Beliefs and Values, asked youth to respond to statements that examined some of their values in the areas of equality, social justice, integrity, responsibility, trust, resistance skills and what type of personal power they felt they had. One statement that they responded to asked them to state what they would do if they thought it was wrong to do something. Forty –six point six percent stated that if they

thought it was wrong to do something, they would not do it, 47.2% stated that they would do it once in awhile and 6.2% stated they would do it anyway. There was no statistical difference ($p = 0.65$) in the way males and females responded to this statement. However, a significant difference ($p= 0.02$) was found in the grades with youth in grade 6/7 being much more likely to state that they would not do something if they thought it was wrong to do so. There was also a statistical difference ($p = .001$) in the way youth responded to this statement based on academic averages. Students with averages of less than 65% were more likely than their peers with averages of 80-100% to do something once in awhile even if they knew it was wrong.

As shown in Table 14, significant differences between gender were found for the factors equality and social justice as well as integrity with females scoring higher for both factors. Among grades, significant differences were found for the factors equality and social justice, integrity and resistance skills and restraint. Grade 6/7 students scored higher than grade 8 to 12 students for the factor equality and social justice. For the factor integrity, grade 6/7 students scored higher than grade 8/9 students and for resistance skills and restraint, grade 6/7 students scored higher than grade 10/12 students. Regarding location, the factor personal power was significantly different with youth living on farms scoring higher than youth living on acreages. In academic achievement, significant differences were found in four of the five factors: equality and social justice, integrity, responsibility and trust and resistance skills and restraint. For the factor, equality and social justice, students with averages of less than 80% scored lower than students with averages of 80% or higher. Students with averages of less than 65% scored lower than students with averages 80% and higher for the factor integrity. For the factor

responsibility and trust students with averages of 80-100% scored higher than students with averages less than 80%. Students with averages of less than 65% scored lower for the factor resistance skills and restraint than did students with an average of 80% or higher.

Table 14

Effects of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Beliefs and Values

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Male	Female	
Equality and Social Justice[1]	29.09_a	33.49_b	25.76*
Integrity[1]	14.64_a	16.08_b	13.17*
Responsibility and Trust[2]	16.35_a	16.65_a	1.20
Resistance Skills and Restraint[2]	23.52_a	25.20_a	3.27
Personal Power[2]	19.95_a	19.47_a	2.06

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Equality and Social Justice	34.60_a	29.49_b	29.41_{bc}	17.02*
Integrity	16.00_a	14.69_b	15.24_a	3.58*
Responsibility and Trust	16.51_a	16.54_a	16.41_a	0.08
Resistance Skills and Restraint	26.00_a	24.03_{ab}	22.84_{bc}	4.32*
Personal Power	19.81_a	19.96_a	19.40_a	0.99

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Equality and Social Justice	30.58_a	32.11_a	31.75_a	1.04
Integrity	15.56_a	15.42_a	15.20_a	0.33
Responsibility and Trust	16.72_a	16.43_a	16.32_a	0.85
Resistance Skills and Restraint	25.05_a	23.22_a	24.18_a	1.08
Personal Power	20.13_a	18.77_b	19.73_a	4.41*

Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Equality and Social Justice	30.11_a	30.69_a	31.39_b	5.20*
Integrity	14.50_a	15.32_{ab}	16.33_{bc}	5.49*
Responsibility and Trust	15.83_a	16.29_a	17.37_b	8.75*
Resistance Skills and Restraint	22.21_a	24.05_{ab}	25.86_{bc}	3.83*
Personal Power	19.26_a	19.57_a	20.37_a	2.99

Note. [1]Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = not important, 5 = important). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

[2]Judgements were made on 5 point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.

*$p < .05$

Recognizing Strengths: Effect of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

For the final category, Recognizing Strengths, students were given a list of 21 strengths. They were asked to check off any of the strengths that they believed they had that others might see for them. They were also given an opportunity to add any other strengths that they thought they might have that were not on the list. Sixteen percent or 48 students wrote for other strengths that they felt they had. Some saw their strengths as being strong or very athletic while others felt that they had strengths such as being helpful, kind, confident, different, smart, organized, generous, pretty or sexy. Others saw their strengths as being compassionate, inventive, imaginative, talented, musical, artistic or being a "breakdancer", biker or a total hippy. Some commented that they saw their strength in the work that they did. One youth stated, "good at my job, not so much for school". A few other comments made by individuals were:

- Great singer usually
- Good with animals and my ability to work with leather

- Gentleman – making others feel comfortable for uncomfortable situations
- I live my opinion, I stick up for people when I think they are being judged unfairly
- Well…I love writing…wait! No, no… that's creativity isn't it?

Sixteen percent of youth also took the opportunity to write down other strengths that they thought people might see for them. Some of them were very athletic, helpful, musical, artistic, easy going, adventurer, really nice, funny, stubborn, different, flexible, sweet, pretty and the best. Other strengths they included were inventive, being a good biker, breakdancer or hard worker, talented at guitar, quiet, cooperative, good looking and energetic. Additional comments regarding perceived strengths included the following:

- I am cool
- A good person
- Crazy!!!
- A really good quader [all terrain vehicle]
- Fun to be around
- Good baseball player
- Overall nice guy for any situation
- I AM JUST HUMAN!

As shown in Table 15, there were no significant differences in gender or location on any of the six factors in this category. Among grades there was a significant difference for the factor personal flexibility in self with students in grades 10/12 scoring higher than students in grades 6/7. In academic achievement, five of the six factors

showed significant differences: interpersonal competence in self, leadership qualities in self, personal flexibility in self, interpersonal competence others see in self and leadership qualities others see in self. Students with averages of less than 65% scored lower for the two factors interpersonal competence in self and interpersonal competence others see in self than students with averages of 80-100%. For the factor leadership qualities in self and leadership qualities others see in self, students with an 80% or higher average scored higher than students with below 80%. Students with averages less than 80% scored higher than students with 80-100% averages for the factor personal flexibility in self.

Table 15

Effects of Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement on Recognizing Strengths

Factors	Gender		F Values
	Male	Female	
Interpersonal Competence in Self	7.57_a	7.76_a	0.62
Leadership Qualities in Self	5.14_a	5.41_a	1.29
Personal Flexibility in Self	2.59_a	2.74_a	1.25
Interpersonal Competence Others See in Self	6.62_a	7.08_a	4.14
Leadership Qualities Others See in Self	5.48_a	5.66_a	0.47
Personal Flexibility Others See in Self	3.32_a	3.52_a	1.45

Factors	Grade			F Values
	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-9	Grade 10-12	
Interpersonal Competence in Self	7.72_a	7.47_a	7.58_a	0.32
Leadership Qualities in Self	5.38_a	5.38_a	5.01_a	1.03
Personal Flexibility in Self	2.37_a	2.64_{ab}	2.93_{bc}	6.94*
Interpersonal Competence Others See in Self	6.89_a	6.69_a	6.81_a	0.23
Leadership Qualities Others See in Self	5.88_a	5.50_a	5.21_a	2.39
Personal Flexibility Others See in Self	3.24_a	3.31_a	3.65_a	2.42

Factors	Location			F Values
	Farm	Acreage	Town	
Interpersonal Competence in Self	7.71_a	7.73_a	7.59_a	0.12
Leadership Qualities in Self	5.19_a	5.31_a	5.42_a	0.37
Personal Flexibility in Self	2.63_a	2.51_a	2.79_a	1.38
Interpersonal Competence Others See in Self	7.05_a	6.88_a	6.63_a	1.35
Leadership Qualities Others See in Self	5.84_a	5.27_a	5.48_a	1.60
Personal Flexibility Others See in Self	3.48_a	3.27_a	3.44_a	0.45

Factors	Academic Achievement			F Values
	<65%	65-79%	80-100%	
Interpersonal Competence in Self	7.24_a	7.69_{ab}	8.09_{bc}	3.34*
Leadership Qualities in Self	4.71_a	5.01_a	6.42_b	18.11*
Personal Flexibility in Self	2.84_a	2.78_a	2.40_b	4.23*
Interpersonal Competence Others See in Self	6.46_a	6.91_{ab}	7.28_{bc}	3.73*
Leadership Qualities Others See in Self	4.85_a	5.57_a	6.47_b	11.24*
Personal Flexibility Others See in Self	3.41_a	3.56_a	3.40_a	0.44

Note. Judgements were made on 2 point scales (0 = no, 1 = yes). Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ using the Bonferroni method.
*$p < .05$

Open–Ended Questions

The last two items for the survey asked students "What is the best thing about growing up in the study town" (Question 123) and "Any additional comments" (Question 124). Eighty-one percent of students chose to respond to question 123 while 36% responded to question 124.

Although there were approximately 8% of youth who felt there was little that was commendable in the study town, the overriding themes for answers to Question 123 were knowing friendly people and safety. This is evidenced in the comments that follow:

- It's a small town, you know everybody and you don't have to be scared when you walk down the street.

- When you walk down the street, everybody says hi.
- Whenever you need a hand it's there when asked.
- Your friends are very close to you and you see them a lot.
- You know everyone and you're not afraid of asking for help from anyone. It's like everyone supports and wants you to be the best you can possibly be.
- It is safe, there is quite a bit of freedom. You get to know most of the people in the community. There are lots of chances of making sports teams and being in various organizations. You can walk across town in 10 minutes.
- It's small. You know everyone. The good people and the bad. You can feel safe here walking around town and not have to worry about people jumping you. Plus you know where everything is. You can get around here with your eyes closed.
- When you go to school, you know everybody & everybody is your friend and people stick up for you and no one is really mean at all.

The main theme of Question 124 seemed to be about the survey itself and that the students liked the survey as indicated by the following comments:

- One thing I want to add is that this survey is a good idea for citizens around Alberta.
- I think that this questionnaire is a great example for kids that are having trouble with their friends, parents or others.
- This survey made me think about certain situations that need to be polished. Thanks.
- I found the questionnaire informative and made myself more aware of myself and surrounding.

- This was an excellent survey. Thanks for allowing us to fill it out, it made me think about a lot of things that occur for my life. Thanks again. Come and visit us sometime.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Healthy youth development is an important process that allows youth to develop the skills and abilities that make it possible for them to grow into healthy young adults. To ensure this type of development in youth, studies (Benard, 1995; Engle, et al, 1996; Gilbert, 1997) indicate that youth need to have positive external and internal sources of reference to act as protective factors and promote resilience. Some of the external sources of reference are the family, peers, other adults and school. Internal references are ones such as beliefs and values about themselves and others, their commitment to school as well as perceived strengths in themselves and through the eyes of other people. The goals of this study were threefold: (a) to have youth complete a survey that offers an opportunity for them to feel empowered by recognizing the strengths in themselves and in their relationships with others, (b) to encourage research that focused on the strengths of youth instead of the deficits, and (c) to use the results of the survey as a building block upon which youth, parents, schools and the community could work together to develop and further enhance the strengths that youth already possess. To help meet the goals of the study, three research questions were asked: (a) what percentage of youth experience the 25 external and internal factors?, (b) what are the relationships between the external factors, gender, grade, location and academic achievement?, and (c) what are the relationships between the internal factors, gender, grade, location and academic achievement?

To fulfill the goals of the study and to present data to respond to the research questions, 305 youth from the study town who were currently attending grade 6 in the

elementary school or grade 7-12 in the high school completed a 124-question survey that asked them to reply to statements about their perceived relationships with their family and siblings, peers, other adults and schools. They were also asked to respond to statements that asked them questions about their beliefs and values as well as their strengths. After analyzing the results, the researcher developed an exploratory framework of healthy youth development that had 12 external factors and 13 internal factors. The factors were analyzed to determine what percentage of youth agreed with these factors. In addition, the internal and external factors were examined to discover how they varied according to the independent variables of gender, grade, location and academic achievement.

External Factors and How They Vary by Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

Of the 25 factors found in the framework developed by the researcher, 12 of them examined youth's relationships with other people or environments. These 12 factors were placed within three categories: Connections, Rules and Expectations and Involvement. In the following sections, the importance of each category to healthy youth development is discussed with support from the relevant literature. Information is also provided that illustrates how the categories were affected by the independent variables of gender, grade, location and academic achievement.

Connections: Variations in Independent Variables

Seventy-four percent of youth stated that they lived at home with two biological parents, 12% lived with one parent and a stepparent and 12% lived in a one-parent family. Connection to family is an integral part of positive youth development (Gilbert,

1997; Leffert, et al, 1998; Scales & Leffert, 1999) especially in terms of resiliency and protective factors. Youth who feel connected to families are less likely to be involved in substance abuse or crime and more likely to do well in school (Benard, 1991; Gilbert, 1997). They also tend to resist negative peer pressure (Scales, 1999a). In the category Connections, the results indicated that approximately three-quarters of the youth who completed the survey agreed that they felt connected to their families. They agreed that they knew their parents cared about them, that their parents often told them they loved them and that they got along well with their parents. In addition, they agreed with the statements that they received help and support from their parents and also felt safe at home. Youth indicated that they felt useful and important in their families, had good conversations with their parents and would talk to their parents if something was bothering them or they wanted to know more about drugs, alcohol or sex. Interestingly, youth also reported that their parents thought their friends were okay, their friends thought that their parents were okay and that their parents were more important to them than their friends. Youth also agreed that their parents spent a lot of time helping other people. This latter connection is important because studies (Jones, 2000; Laursen, 2000) indicated that youth who have parents who help others often are themselves involved in helping others either when they are youths or as adults.

Siblings can play an important role in their brother and sisters' lives both as a protective factor and as role models (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Myers (2001) of the Child Development Institute, located in the USA, states, "It seems strange that whenever the word sibling comes up, the word rivalry seems sure to follow despite the fact that there are many solid sibling relationships in families (brothers and sisters who like and enjoy

one another) (p. 1). It is important to note that nearly 70% of youth agreed that they cared about their siblings and their siblings cared about them.

Positive peer influence can be invaluable in helping youth make good choices as well as providing other people for youth to discuss the ups and downs in their lives (Gipson, et al, 1999; Ungar, 2000). Results of this research indicated that peers were an important connection for many youth with approximately three-quarters of youth agreeing that they felt connected to their friends. Youth agreed that they would talk to their friends if they wanted to know more about drugs, alcohol or sex; they could talk to their friends if something was bothering them and their friends would do the same and as well they felt safe with their friends.

Adults other than parents can also provide support and structure for youth and may at times be the people who help a youth to succeed (Benard, 1995; Scales & Leffert, 1999). The more adults youth have in their lives who encourage them, talk with them and spend time with them, the greater the possibility youth will flourish. If youth feel safe with adults, can talk to them about things that bother them and can observe them helping others, youth tend to feel less marginalized. Just over 60% of youth in the study town agreed that they knew three or more adults who they could rely on in the aforementioned ways.

While 60% of youth knew adults whom they felt connected to, they were less likely to agree that the adults perceived youth in their community in a positive way. Less than half of the youth who completed the survey agreed that adults in the study town cared about teenagers living in that town, were good role models for teenagers, tried to make the town safe for teenagers, liked doing activities with teenagers, saw teenagers as

responsible people or saw the good in teenagers. Unfortunately, this perception is fairly common among Canadian youth who feel that adults do not take them seriously and all too often negatively stereotype them (Bibby, 2001).

Connecting to school can also be an important protective factor for youth. School can be a place that nurtures "the emotional, social and ethical development of young people" (Lantieri, 2001, p. 34). However, in this study just over 50% of youth stated that they cared about their school, felt safe at school, helped make decisions about what goes on at school or thought that it was wrong for teenagers to physically fight with each other. The results indicate that while the four statements that students responded to should not be construed as the only connections youth have with their school, there is cause for concern. In order for youth to do well in school, it is important that they feel that they are safe while attending school. If they feel that their friends think it is okay to physically fight with each other and if that happens at school, they may feel unsafe. They may also feel unsafe if they are being sexual harassed, bullied or being subjected to other forms of negative socialization. Some of the feeling about not being safe in school may also be due in part to the violent incidents that have happened in other schools in both Canada and the United States. The fact that only half of the students responded that they cared about their school or felt that they helped make decisions about what went on at their school is also reason for concern. Students who feel connected to their school in these two ways tend to do better academically, skip school less frequently and are involved in more school activities (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Gender. The importance of connecting to family, other adults, peers and school has been well documented in the literature (Benard, 1991; Osher, 1996; Search Institute, 1997). In this study, contrary to results in other research (Bibby, 2001) males appeared to value being connected to their families and siblings as much as females. Males also seemed to hold the same beliefs as females about the way that they think adults in society perceive youth. However, females were more likely than males to know three or more adults they could rely on, were closer to their peers and felt more connected to their school. These results are similar to other results (Bibby, 2001; Scales & Leffert, 1999) that demonstrate that females may feel more connected than do males to peers and their school.

Grade. As expected from literature on adolescent development (Myers, 2001; Scales & Leffert, 1999), youth in lower grades indicated that they were more connected to their families and to school than youth in higher grades. As youth get older, while connections with their families remain, relationships with peers, school and perhaps other adults such as a coaches or teachers increase in importance. Younger youth had a more favorable view of how they believed adults perceive youth than did older youth. This may be due partly because youth in grade 6 and 7 have not yet experienced the negative stereotyping that older youth perceive to have received from some adults (Finn and Checkoway, 1998). Peer relationships, whether positive or negative are important for youth of all ages. However, in this study, being connected to peers was more important for youth in grades 10 to 12 than youth in the lower grades. This may be because of the stage that youth are at in the developmental process according to the Center for Adolescent Studies (1996). While youth in grade 6 and 7may be more

strongly connected to their families than to others, for youth in high school, close friendships gain importance. Friends are often seen as confidantes and used to help each other think ideas through and make decisions that about various aspects of their lives.

Location. In this study, very few differences were noted in relation to how the external factors varied with location. In other words, for the most part, youth who lived on acreages, farms or in town responded in a similar fashion to the majority of the statements. However, one interesting difference was noted in the Connections category. Youth who lived on acreages appeared to be more connected to their peers than those who lived in town. At this point, the researcher has been unable to find any studies that might shed some light on this finding nor can she really speculate on why there was this difference.

Academic Achievement. Academic achievement is often used as a measure to explore various aspects of youth behavior (Department of Education, 1999). In this study, there were no differences between youth with varying academic averages in their connections to their family or their siblings. There were also no academic differences in the number of adults youth felt that they could rely on. However, youth who had averages below 65% had a less positive view of adults' perception of youth than did youth who had averages of 80% of higher. This may be due partly because youth with lower academic averages tend to be more involved in behaviors that are viewed negatively by adults, which in turn may lead adults to respond negatively toward these youth. The finding that students with high academic averages (>80%) were more likely than their peers with averages below 80% to feel connected to their school is well addressed in literature (Madgol, 1994; Scales and Leffert, 1999). Youth with academic

honors also stated that they were more inclined to feel safe with their friends, and talk with their friends than were their peers with averages in the 65-79% range. Interestingly, there was no significant difference among youth with averages below 65% and youth with averages 80% and above in how connected they felt to their peers.

Rules and Expectations: Variations in Independent Variables

Another component of healthy youth development is structure and specific expectations from others about how youth should act (Benard, 1991; Bogenschneider, 1996; Scales & Leffert, 1999). Structure or boundaries are important for youth because it allows them to feel safe and protected from various aspects of life that they are not sure how to navigate. For example, youth who are expected to tell their parents where they are going when they go out know that their parents care about them and worry about them (Gilbert, 1997). Although at times, youth may appear to rail against this type of protectiveness, in reality youth who do not have these boundaries will often state that they wish they did. The importance of structure in youth's lives was confirmed in the Rules and Expectations category in family rules and expectations. Eighty percent of youth agreed that they thought it was okay for their parents to set rules even if they disagreed with the rules, that there were clear rules in the family about what they could or could not do, that there were consequences for breaking the rules and that parents wanted to know where and with whom they were with when they went out. They also felt that their parents expected them and encouraged them to be the best they could be.

Although the majority of youth agreed with rules and expectations put forth by their family, there was much less agreement with other adult expectations. Only 56% of youth agreed that adults think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol, do drugs, smoke

cigarettes, have sex or gamble. There may be three possible reasons that explain this result. One, youth may not have a common understanding of what adults' expectations are for youth. Two, because of youth's perceptions of how adults view them they may believe that adults expect youth to drink alcohol, do drugs and so on. Three, youth may be receiving mixed messages from adults about some of these activities. For example, adults who support activities such as safe grads where youth, including some who are underage, drink as much as they want to while adults watch may be sending a mixed message to youth about drinking and the responsibilities associated with it.

Peers are often seen as possible negative influences in youth's lives because they may be able to convince youth to become involved in activities that are not beneficial to them through peer pressure (Lingren, 1997). However, peers can also play positive roles in youth's lives that can help promote healthy youth development (Ungar, 2000; Wisconsin Education Association Council, 2000). The Center for Adolescent Studies (1996) states that "most teenagers feel that their friends are likely to pressure them not to use drugs or not to engage in sexual activities" (p. 1). Interestingly, this study indicated that two-thirds of youth agree that their peers think it is okay if they do not smoke, drink, do drugs or have sex.

Students, teachers and the administration that constitute the school system can also play an integral role in healthy youth development (Madgol, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1999). How youth perceive other students' reactions and relationships can make the school years a satisfying and/or fear-inspiring experience (Brendtro, 2001). A teacher who cares and expects the best of his/her students can have a far-reaching impact on their lives. In fact, teachers are often seen as the one important adult in a youth's life who

helped them deal with, and overcome adversity (Benard, 1995). Schools that have clear rules and consequences for disobeying the rules provide a safe haven for students to learn and grow into healthy young adults (Madgol, 1994). Over two thirds of youth indicated that students in their school cared about them, that their teachers encourage them to do the best that they can and that there are clear rules at their school and consequences for disobeying the rules.

Gender. Rules and expectations are often different for males and females and the results of this study confirmed this. However, why they are different is difficult to assess because of the complexity of the relation of parenting behaviors to youth behaviors. Scales & Leffert (1999) state that moderating this relationship may be a number of factors such as "age of the adolescent (early, mid-, or late adolescence), gender, type of controls or boundaries used, and aspects of the parent's personality such as self-perceptions of efficacy" (p. 82). Although there were no differences between males and females in school rules and expectations, family rules and expectations were reported to be higher for females than males. Female respondents also indicated that they felt that adults were more likely to think it was wrong for females than males to use alcohol, drugs, smoke, and gamble or have sex. This result may be because of double standards for gender that are prevalent in our society. While females believed adults had certain expectations of them that were different than for males, males were less likely than females to agree that their peers thought it was okay if they chose not to drink, smoke, do drugs or have sex.

Grade. Students in grades 6 and 7 felt more strongly than students in other

grades that adults would think it was wrong for them to engage in negative behaviors such as drinking or smoking. They were also more likely to state that their peers would find it okay if they did not drink, smoke, do drugs or have sex. As well, they were more likely to believe that there were clear rules and consequences at school, that teachers encouraged them and that other students cared about them. These results are similar to those of Scales & Leffert (1999) that indicate that youth in lower grades tend to be less involved in negative behaviors than youth in higher grades. Interestingly, in this study, there were no differences in grade in relation to family rules and expectations. In other words, family rules and expectations appear to have been similar for youth regardless of grade.

Location. There were no variations among youth who lived on farms, acreages or in town in the way in which they responded to the statements in this category. Evidently, youth in all three locations perceived family rules and expectations, adult and peer expectations and school rules and expectations in a similar way.

Academic Achievement. In relation to academic achievement, youth did not perceive any differences in adults' expectations about teenagers drinking, using drugs, smoking, gambling or having sex; but there were differences in family rules and expectations, peer expectations and school rules and expectations. Results indicated that youth with academic averages of 80% or above had higher family rules and expectations than youth with averages between 65-79%. Interestingly, youth who had averages below 65% did not appear to have fewer family rules and expectations than did their peers with higher academic grades. This is contrary to other research that indicates that youth with lower academic grades often have less expectations and rules from their families.

However, youth with averages of less than 65% were more likely than their peers with averages of 80% or above to believe that their friends thought it was okay if they did drink, smoke, do drugs or have sex. This result is similar Scales' results (1996) that indicated that youth with lower academic grades tend to be more likely to engage in negative behaviors. Finally, youth with averages below 80% were less likely to agree that there were clear rules and consequences at school, that teachers encouraged them to be the best they could be or that other students cared about them.

A relationship was found between grade and location in the family rules and expectation factor in the Rules and Expectation category. Youth who lived in town and were in grade 6/7 reported that they had stricter rules and expectations placed on them by family members than did youth who lived on farms or in town . However, youth who were in grade 8/9 and lived on farms or acreages scored higher than youth in the same grade who lived in town. More research would be needed to understand why these differences occurred.

A second relationship was found in peer expectations between gender and grade. Female youth in grades 10/12 were more likely than male youth in grades 10/12 to indicate that their peers thought it was okay if they did not smoke, drink, do drugs or have sex. These results correlate with other results in this study that indicate that females are more likely than males to have peers that accept their decision not to engage in negative behavior.

A third relationship in this category occurred in school rules and expectations between gender and academic achievement. As males' academic averages increased so did their scores for the factor school rules and expectations. However, for females, scores

decreased as academic achievement increased from <65% to 65-79% and then increased as academic grades increased to 80-100%. While the upward trend in males agreeing with school rules and expectations as academic achievement increases appears logical, the drop in agreeing with the rules and expectations among females with 65-79% averages needs further research.

Involvement: Variations in Independent Variables

Involvement in physical activities as well as in structured and unstructured activities is an important component of positive youth development. Youth who do some type of physical activity tend to have a better self image, eat healthier and be physically healthier than their counterparts who do no physical exercise. In this study, results indicated that only one-third of youth are involved in three or more hours of physical activity per week which could include doing physical activity by oneself or on a sports team in school or in the community or helping out with a sports team in school or in the community. This is reason for concern not only because of the desire to have healthy development in youth but also for health in later life. A recent article in Newsweek (Adler and Raymond, 2001) indicated that exercise in youth can help to significantly decrease health risks such as heart attacks, osteoporosis and some cancers.

Furthermore, youth who are involved in structured activities are less likely to drop out of school, do better academically at school and have a more positive sense of themselves (Madgol, 1994). Youth who attend various programs tend to develop problem solving and decision making skills as well as a sense of belonging. Likewise, youth who spend time volunteering have a greater sense of personal and social responsibility, increased community involvement as an adult and decreased school failure

(Frey, 1999). However, in the study town, less than one-quarter of youth stated that they were involved in structured activities such as clubs or organizations in or out of school; religious activities; lessons in music, art, drama or dance after school; or being a leader in a group or organization or in unstructured activities such as helping friends or neighbors or volunteering. These low numbers could be the results of the limited number of structured activities that exist for youth to be involved in as well as limited volunteer opportunities. Two other reasons may be the number of students who have to take the bus home after school which may make it more difficult for them to participate in activities after school or financial considerations.

Two activities where youth stated that they spend three or more hours a week was watching television or movies or being on the Internet or computer. The reason why there is concern about the amount of time youth spend in these activities is that the media may provide mixed messages for youth (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001). For example, violence, drinking alcohol and having unprotected sex are messages that youth see constantly in the media yet are inconsistent with society's rules and expectations for them. Also watching television or movies, chatting with friends on the Internet or playing computer games takes time away from physical activities (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001).

Gender, Grade and Location. Results of this category indicated that there were no significant differences between involvement and the independent variables, gender, grades and location. These results are of some interest because traditionally students in lower grades are more physically active than students in higher grades (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1999). As well,

research (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1999) has reported that males do more physical activity than females while females tend to be more involved in structured and unstructured activities than do males (Scales & Leffert, 1999). More research is needed to determine why this study's results vary from previous results.

Academic Achievement. Although there were no significant differences between the three aforementioned variables, there were variations in the independent variable, academic achievement in physical activity and structured and unstructured activities. Students who had averages of 80% or better were more likely than students with averages of less than 65% to be involved in some type of physical activity for three or more hours per week. They also were more involved in structured and unstructured activities than their peers who had less than 80%. These results are once again similar to results in another study (Scales & Leffert, 1999) that indicates that higher academic achievement levels can be correlated with greater involvement in physical activities as well as structured and unstructured activities. Activities such as watching television or movies or being on the computer or Internet were not affected by academic achievement.

Internal Factors and How They Vary by Gender, Grade, Location and Academic Achievement

Of the 25 factors found in the framework developed by the researcher, 13 of them examined youth's relationship with themselves and in relation to others. These 13 factors were placed within three categories: Desire to Learn, Beliefs and Values and Recognizing Strengths. In the following sections, the importance of each category to healthy youth development is discussed and information is provided to illustrate how the categories

were affected by the independent variables, gender, grade, location and academic achievement.

Desire to Learn: Variations in Independent Variables

The importance of education on positive youth development can not be understated. One of the components of doing well at school is doing homework on a regular basis. This study however indicated that only 8% did more than 2 hours of homework per night. Eighty-five percent of youth did less than one hour (40%) or one to two hours (45%) per night. These results are consistent with other results (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 2000) that state that few students spend much time in doing daily homework. Females were more likely to do homework on a regular basis than males.

Youth who succeed at school tend to have higher self-esteem and a more positive view of the future. Although the statements in the two factors found in this category do not examine all of the necessary variables that help youth succeed in school, research by Benard (1995) and Madgol (1994) have shown them to have an influence.

Teachers often play an important role in the lives of youth and research has shown that for some youth, teachers are the most important role models youth might have. Schools that facilitate success in students often have high expectations for students and work hard to ensure that youth are given ongoing opportunities to be successful (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1999; Wisconsin Education Association Council, 2000).

However, in order for youth to make it work at school, many different variables must be considered. There must be mutual respect between teachers and administrators

and students, the student must try to do his or her best and teachers must believe in their students and see them as responsible (Howard & Dryden, 1999). Since students need to be able to understand what is taught in school so that they can do the homework that is given to them, learning difficulties must be recognized and appropriate programs put in place so youth can succeed (Brendtro & Cunningham, 1998). As well, youth must be committed to attending school on a regular basis and therefore seldom skip classes (Scales & Leffert, 1999). 70% of youth in this study indicated that they agreed that they were committed to making it work at school.

Parental support and interest in what youth are doing in school and parental involvement in school activities can help youth believe in the importance of education in their lives. Positive parental support in schooling can be extremely beneficial to youth. Research shows that youth whose parents are involved in their schooling, "get better grades and test scores, graduate from high school at higher rates, are more likely to go on to higher education and are better behaved and have more positive attitudes" (Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 1998, p. 1). In this study, 61% of youth agreed that their parents were involved in some way in their schooling whether it was through asking them about their homework, helping them with their homework when asked, talking to them about what they were doing in school or attending school events.

Gender. Research (Bibby, 2001) in this area indicates that females are more likely than males to be committed to school, to want to do well in school and get along with their teachers. The results in this study are consistent with Bibby's research. There was no significant difference between gender in how involved their parents were in school.

Grade. Students in grades 6 and 7 indicated that they were more committed to school than students in higher grades. The students' developmental level or their level of maturity could explain this result. Parental involvement in school was also highest among students in grade 6 and 7, decreased somewhat for grade 8 and 9 students and decreased greatly for students in grades 10-12. One reason for this decrease may be that there is a perception by parents that students in higher grades do not want their parents to be involved in their school lives. Another reason may be that parents may find it more difficult to help their children with homework as they progress into the higher grades. A third reason might be that parents may be more involved in their careers or looking after younger children and therefore less available to attend school events or ask detailed questions about what happened at school or what homework their teens might have.

Location. There were no significant differences in how youth who lived on farms, on acreages or in town perceived their attitude towards school. Nor was there any difference in how involved parents who lived on farms, acreages or in town were in their children's schooling.

Academic Achievement. Students with higher academic averages expressed a greater commitment to school and towards their teachers. Parents of students who had 80% or higher academic averages were also more involved in their children's schooling than were parents who had children with lower academic averages. These results are similar to other results (Magdol, 1994; Massachusetts Department of Education, 1999) which illustrate the importance of parental involvement in their children's schooling at all grade levels.

Beliefs and Values: Variations in Independent Variables

In this category, a variety of beliefs and values that youth might hold were explored. It is important to note that the beliefs and values listed below are not an exhaustive list but rather selected components that are part of positive youth development as identified in the literature.

Before youth were asked to state whether they would become involved in negative behaviors at their current age, they were asked if they thought it was wrong to do something, would they do it anyway. Forty-seven percent of youth stated that they would not do something if they thought it was wrong to do so, 47% said that they might do it once in awhile and 6% stated that they would do it anyway. Males and females responded similarly to this question and youth in grade 6 were more likely to state that they would not do something if they thought it was wrong to do so. This latter result fits with where youth are in the development process. Youth who had academic averages of less than 65% were also more likely than youth with averages of 65% or above to state that they would do something once in awhile even if they thought it was wrong.

Youth who have strong beliefs about the importance of helping others, helping to reduce poverty and hunger, making the world a better place in which to live and giving time or money to make life better for others tend to be able to look beyond themselves and validate their self-worth (Laursen, 2000). Believing that people should be treated fairly and that everyone should have equal rights and opportunities is important to youth who may often feel marginalized by society. Youth who are interested in knowing people of different races are often more tolerant and accepting of differences among people than youth who reject people of other races. Finally, youth who are religious or spiritual are

more likely to have strong positive beliefs and values (Benson, 1997). Fifty-eight percent of youth who completed this survey agreed that it was important to have the beliefs and values of equality and social justice.

Integrity as defined in this study means the ability to accept responsibility for one's actions even if they will get in trouble, to tell the truth when it is not easy and to do what one believes is right even if it is unpopular to do so. Youth who have integrity tend to resist negative peer pressure, and are usually honest and of a somewhat independent nature. Seventy-one percent of youth stated that they agreed with the four statements about integrity.

The importance of being responsible and trustworthy is an important component of healthy youth development. Although there are many ways of determining responsibility and trust, this study examined whether youth felt they were responsible, whether they believed their friends and parents thought they were responsible and whether they believed their parents could trust them. Eighty-four percent of youth agreed that they believed that they had the aforementioned attributes.

The belief or value that it is wrong for people at certain ages to drink alcohol, do drugs, smoke cigarettes, gamble, have sex, lie or cheat or steal or shoplift was the focus of the factor resistance skills and restraint. Just over half of the youth agreed that it was wrong to do these behaviors. Youth who engage in these behaviors especially when young are more likely to be negatively affected by them as they get older. For example, youth who start smoking before they are 18 years of age are more likely to continue to smoke while youth who start drinking or using drugs at a young age tend to carry on with these behaviors throughout adolescence and sometimes into adulthood (AADAC, 2000).

Three-quarters of the youth agreed with the beliefs listed in the factor personal power which examined how youth perceived themselves, how happy they were, whether they had control over things that happen to them, whether they were good at finding ways to make things better and whether they thought they would have a good life when they were adults. Youth who have a strong belief in themselves tend to do well in school, get along well with parents, teachers, others adults and their peers (Benard, 1991).

Gender. Research (Bibby, 2001) indicated that females usually score higher on questions that have to do with equality and social justice and this study confirms Bibby's results. Females were also more likely than males to see themselves as having integrity. Interestingly, there were no gender differences in the way youth perceived themselves in regards to being responsible or trustworthy; in their belief about negative behaviors such as drinking, doing drugs or lying or stealing; or in their belief about their own personal power. The results about personal power contradicts previous research that has reported that females are often perceived as having a lesser degree of personal power than males (McDonnell, 2000; Wisconsin Education Association Council, 2000).

Grade. Grade 6 and 7 students indicated that they had a stronger sense of equality and social justice than students in other grades. This may be because students in the lower grades tend to be more idealistic. They also saw themselves as having more integrity than students in grades 8 and 9 but not students in grades 10 through 12. The drop in integrity in students in grade 8 and 9 may be because of the development process. This is a time when youth are testing new behaviors and attitudes that may sometimes not be considered socially acceptable and may include taking less responsibility for their

actions. Students in grade 6 and 7 also saw themselves as having more resistance skills and restraint than students in grades 10 through 12. This may be due in part to the age of grade 6 and 7 students but also because some of the students in the higher grades would be allowed to legally drink and smoke and may believe that they are old enough to have sex. Students in all grades however had similar beliefs and values about being responsible, trustworthy and having personal power.

Location. Youth who lived on farms, acreages and in town had similar beliefs and values in the areas of equality and social justice, integrity, responsibility and trust and resistance skills and restraint. However, youth who lived on farms indicated that they had a greater sense of personal power than did youth who lived on acreages. This may be due partly because farm youth often play an integral role in making the family farm successful and this role may impact these youth so they have a stronger sense of their personal power.

Academic Achievement. For the most part, research (Benard, 1995; Scales and Leffert, 1999; Modgal, 1994) demonstrates that students with higher academic averages usually have a stronger belief and value system than do students with lower averages and the results in this study are comparable. Students with averages of 80% were more likely to have a stronger belief in the importance of equality and social justice than students were with averages below 80% and they also rated themselves as having more integrity than students with an academic average of less than 65%. They also agreed that they saw themselves as being more trustworthy and responsible than students with averages below 80% and had more resistance skills and restraint than students with

academic averages of less than 65%. The only area that there did not appear to be a difference due to academic grades was in the area of personal power.

Recognizing Strengths: Variations in Independent Variables

This category questioned youth about the strengths that they perceived in themselves as well as strengths that they thought others might see in them. This is not an exhaustive list of strengths but rather a compilation of the strengths discussed in the literature that were instrumental in promoting positive youth development. One of the most important strengths youth have is being able to see themselves positively. All too often youth focus on their perceived deficits or what they think others perceive are their deficits. Youth were also given an option to add other strengths that were not listed and many chose to do so.

Strengths that were seen as important for interpersonal competence were ones such as being respectful to self and others, being friendly and trusting. Eighty-five percent of youth agreed that they believed they had these types of strengths in themselves and 87% believed that other people saw these strengths in them. Interpersonal competence is important because it helps youth interact with others in a positive way, helps them maintain friendships and make choices that increases their belief in themselves (Benard, 1991; Scales & Leffert, 1999).

Youth who stated that they had leadership qualities saw themselves as leaders, positive thinkers, independent and role models. These strengths can help youth resist negative peer pressure and stand up for ideals that they believe in (Brooks, 1994; Turner, Norman & Zunz, 1995). Sixty-seven percent of youth agreed that they had strengths such as these and 70% stated that they believed other people saw these strengths in them.

Youth who see themselves as flexible are more likely to deal with adversity successfully than youth who are inflexible or rigid (Benard, 1991). Being able to accept criticism, having a laid back attitude and a sense of humor are characteristics of personal flexibility and may also be indications of individual personality characteristics. Sixty-eight percent of youth indicated that they saw these strengths in themselves while 69% felt that other people saw these strengths in them.

Gender and Location. Males and females responded in the same manner when checking off strengths they perceived in themselves and in how they thought other people perceived their strengths. This result is of interest because strengths are often seen as either male or female. For example, females are often seen as more caring, trusting and creative while males are seen as having strengths such as athletic, independent and laid back. However, these generalizations were not supported in this study. There were no differences among youth who lived on farms, acreages or in town on how they perceived strengths in themselves or how they thought others perceived strengths in them.

Grade. There was very little difference among grades in how youth perceived their strengths and how they thought others saw their strengths. The only significant difference among grades was in the area of personal flexibility in self where students in grade 10 through 12 saw themselves as more flexible than students in grades 6 and 7. This result may be explained by the developmental process; that is, as youth mature they tend to become more sure of themselves and less worried about what others think or say about them (Center for Adolescent Studies, 1996). In addition, their sense of humor may become more developed and they may also become more open-minded.

Academic Achievement. Similar to other results in this study, youth with 80% or higher had a more positive view of themselves and their external environment. Having interpersonal competencies such as being friendly, caring and able to make choices that were good for them were more frequently chosen by youth with averages of 80% or higher than by youth with less than 65% averages. Youth with 80% or better averages were more likely than students with averages below 80% to see themselves and believe others saw them having leadership qualities such as being leaders, positive thinkers, intelligent and role models. However, they were less inclined than their peers with averages below 80% to see themselves as having personal flexibility strengths such as being laid-back and able to accept criticism. However, there was no difference among youth in relation to academic averages in how they believed others saw them in regards to their personal flexibility.

Open-ended Questions

Eighty-one percent of youth responded to the question "what is the best thing about growing up in the study town?" Out of 247 comments, 227 or 92% of the responses were positive. From their comments it was clear that youth do feel close to their families, school, peers, and community and gain strength from their relationships with them. The most common response of the 8% of youth who had negative comments about what was the best thing about growing up in the study town was "nothing". Finally, it is important to note that in the open–ended question 'additional comments" youth who commented to this question reported that they enjoyed completing a survey that focused on what was positive in their life. Since nearly 70% of youth completed the 122 questions and then answered the open-ended questions, this response rate could be

interpreted that they were thinking about their answers and wanted their voices to be heard.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The results that were obtained are valuable and informative in meeting the goals of the research and responding to the research questions. However, there are delimitations and limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of the results.

Delimitations

One delimitation is that the survey did not include all youth in the community. Youth who were homeschooled, had dropped out of school, were not at school on the day of the survey, who did not choose to participate or were in other situations were not part of the study. A second delimitation was that the study only focused on what youth experienced as strengths. While the researcher chose for this study to examine only this aspect of youth development, to understand the complexity of youth development and gain greater insight into youth as individuals, it is important to integrate risk-focused approaches in theory and in practice. A third delimitation was that since the study was conducted in a small rural town, it is not possible to generalize the results to larger rural or urban areas.

Limitations

Methodology. A survey provides only a snapshot of how respondents feel or respond at that particular point in time. If a student had failed a test at school the day before or had an argument with a friend or was feeling unusually positive the day of the survey, the responses to the statements may have been different than what they would have been on another day. In addition, since the survey was an anonymous self-reporting

questionnaire there was no actual way of checking the validity of the students' responses in areas such as academic achievement or family composition. Also, although an excellent response rate of nearly 70% was achieved, how the other 30% of youth might have answered the survey is unknown. In other words, the 30% that did not take part in the survey may have responded negatively or positively to the statements which could have changed the results.

Factors. The reliability of some of the factors was low due in part to a limited number of questions about a specific topic. Although 25 factors were suggested to be important in healthy youth development, there are undoubtedly many other factors in youth's lives that play a significant role in facilitating their growth into healthy, positive young adults. Independent variables other than those examined in this study may also be important to address in examining how the factors may be affected by independent variables. In addition, at this time there is no clear understanding of how the categories and factors relate to each other. For example, how important are Connections in developing a youth's Beliefs and Values or how important is the factor making it work at school to the factor school rules and expectations especially when difficulties may be experienced because of their gender, grade level, location or academic achievement?

Other limitations. While this study showed correlations between statements and variables, it did not demonstrate cause and effect. In other words, no conclusions can be reached on whether one result was the cause or effect of another. Finally, this study and the resulting framework are exploratory in nature and more testing and in all likelihood changes to the framework would be necessary for any future studies.

Future Research

There are many areas that could be explored in future research on strengths of youth. Examining strengths and what, if any relationships there are to risk factors would be interesting to explore. The role of siblings as a protective factor in healthy youth development would also be a possible research topic. Examining how feeling safe at school relates to feeling connected to school may increase awareness about the concerns youth have in this area. Peer relationships as well as perceptions about what youth believe peers expect and how they might differ from reality would also be a topic to examine in greater detail. How employment impacts the way youth, especially young males, perceive external and internal factors would provide additional data to understand strengths. Longitudinal studies would be helpful in determining whether strength-based programs are successful.

Recommendations

General

Focusing on one of the six categories in depth instead of gathering data for all six of the categories would have provided more information about the strengths of youth in a specific area. For example, limiting the research to one category, such as, Connections would have allowed more questions about youth's relationship with family, siblings, adults, peers and school. With a singular focus, the opportunity for more open-ended questions that would provide insight into how youth understand their relationships with others and in what way those relationships provide strength to them could be included. Developing a survey in this way could make it easier for youth to respond since the focus would be on one topic rather than several.

Setting Specific

Making recommendations about what goals should be set to precipitate change in areas of concern are not included. The reason for this is that the researcher wants to have forums in the study town that will allow the people of that town to work together to decide what and how they can build on the results of the study. Therefore, the researcher plans to provide the results of the study to all people in the community through meetings with youth, parent liaison groups, school board meetings, school staff meetings, the media and open community meetings. In presenting information to the various groups, the researcher has chosen not to be the "expert" on what should be done but rather a professional who can play a role in promoting healthy youth development by disseminating information about the Strengths of (name of town) Youth Survey, asking questions to start the discussions and facilitating the subsequent dialogue. By ensuring there is a participatory approach in deciding how to use the results, the community will be encouraged to address all of the findings including both concerns and strengths.

With that said, the researcher recommends that at the meetings the following information be presented:

1. The results of the study indicate that through the work of families, schools, community members and youth themselves, the majority of youth are and will experience a healthy, positive adolescent development. People need to take a minute and praise themselves for the work they have already done and accept that they are a good job in helping youth succeed.
2. At all times, people need to be aware of the correlation between the factors and gender, grade, location or academic achievement and whether there are differences

and if they are significant. For example, grade 8 students might appear to be less connected to their families than grade 6 students but are they in actual fact less so and if they are is it because of the maturation process?

3. Look at what is being done well, ask why it works and then work together to continually increase the percentage of youth who are experiencing a certain factor. The following questions could provide a starting point for different factors where high percentages of youth experience these strengths:
    - If 73% of youth experience a connection with their families, how can that number be increased?
    - Would programs such as positive parenting workshops, monthly teen – parent meetings be helpful? If yes, in what way would these activities be helpful? Examining what is working and how and why they are working could be the focus of this discussion or other discussions.
    - If 62% of parents are involved in some aspect of their child's schooling, how do we increase that number? Would it be helpful to have parent school nights so they can learn how to do the math or english that their child is struggling with?
4. Address the issues where there is concern by looking at how the issue is successfully handled by people in the study town or in other communities. The researcher, while acknowledging that everyone may not see the same issues as concerns, sees that the following factors are a concern because of the lower percentage of youth experiencing these strengths:
    - adult connections (42%)

- adult expectations (57%)
- school connections (54%)
- equality and social justice (58%)
- resistance skills and restraint (57%)
- physical activity (34%)
- structured and unstructured activity (22%)

The questions that might be put forth at the meetings include the following:

1. Do adults have a negative opinion about youth? If yes, why do adults have a negative opinion and how can it be changed? If no, why do youth think this way and how can it be changed?
2. Do adults realize that they have different expectations for females and males regarding negative behavior? Do they think it should change?
3. What connects youth to school? Do those connections exist in the school?
4. Are people satisfied with the percentage of youth who value equality and social justice? If not, why not and how can more youth come to value equality and justice?
5. How do parents, schools and the community feel about youth engaging in negative behavior? Are there certain behaviors that are more acceptable than others? If yes, what are they and why are they more acceptable?
6. Are people satisfied with the amount of activity that the youth are involved in? What types of activities are available for youth at this time? How can the activities be made more accessible to youth?
7. Looking at the results of the study, what else needs to be addressed?

Implications for Health Promotion

Health promotion is "the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health" (World Health Organization, 1984). The definition of health is not only physical but also emotional, social and spiritual in nature. The well-being of the whole individual is paramount in this concept (Labonte, 1995). This study examined some of the emotional and social aspects of health in youth by exploring the strengths youth perceived in themselves as well as the strengths they received from other people's caring and support. The results indicated that youth experience some of the elements that are an integral part of health promotion such as social support and a sense of personal power.

When viewing the nine determinants of health as outlined in Hamilton and Bhatti's (1996) article it is evident that the youth in the study town experience some of those determinants. Youth agreed that they feel safe in their town (physical environment) had close connections to family, siblings and peers (social support networks) and perceived strengths in themselves that could help them cope with adversity (personal health practices and coping skills). However, there were aspects of the determinants of health that were not met. For example, the results indicated that youth felt there was a perceived lack of support among community members towards youth (social support networks). Only 34% of youth engaged in 3 or more hours per week of physical activity which could be interpreted as a concern in terms of their physical health (personal health practices and coping skills). The social support network could be enhanced for youth by finding ways to dispel some of the negative perceptions that youth and adult community members appear to have about each other. Ensuring that youth have adequate

opportunities to engage in physical activities whether at school or in the community and encouraging youth to become more active through adult role modeling and support should increase youth's personal health practices.

Conclusion

Youth are valuable resources that society can not afford to marginalize. The importance of families, schools and communities that embrace the notion of positive youth development can not be understated. We must recognize their strengths and be emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually available to them. With support, youth can exceed expectations and overcome adversity. As adults, we must look for the potential, not pathology in youth. In research, while it is important to understand risk–related behaviors and how they can negatively affect youth's healthy development, it is also important to ensure that the strengths of youth are documented. Society needs to hear about and understand what strengths youth have so that all members of society can work together to help youth develop into physically, emotionally and socially healthy young adults. In closing, a statement made in 1921 by Karl Wilker (cited in Brendtro & Ness, 1995) clearly summarizes the reason why a strength-based framework is relevant today when working with youth and their families, schools and communities.

> What we want to achieve in our work with young people is to find out and strengthen the positive and healthy elements, no matter how deeply they are hidden. We enthusiastically believe in the existence of those elements even in the seemingly worst of our adolescents (p. 4).

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Appendix 1

The Strengths of _____Youth

This survey asks questions about your strengths. There are also questions about how you feel about yourself, parents, friends, school and community.

I would appreciate it if you completed the survey but it is important to remember that **your participation in completing this survey is completely voluntary. If you see a question you do not want to answer, leave it and go on to the next question.**

Your answers on this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Do **NOT** put your name on this form. No one will be able to connect your answers with your name.

This is not a test for school grades. Please fill in every answer and be as honest as you can.

IMPORTANT MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Please **circle** only ONE number
- Make sure the circle you make is dark
- Erase cleanly any answer you may wish to change

EXAMPLES

Proper Mark

1….2….3….4….5

Improper Marks

1….2….3….4….5 1….2….3….4….5

Example:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am glad I am me	1	2	3	4	5

All About You

1. How old are you?
   I am _____ years old (fill in your age)

2. What grade are you in?
   I am in grade _____ (fill in your grade)

3. What is your sex? (Check one)
   ___Male ____Female

4. I live on a (Check one)
   ___ farm
   ___ acreage
   ___ in town

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. I am glad I am me	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am a responsible person	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel happy most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have control over the things that happen to me in my life	1	2	3	4	5
9. When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things better	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I am an adult, I am sure I will have a good life	1	2	3	4	5

How important is each of the following to you? Mark one answer for each.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Unsure	Quite Important	Extremely Important
11. Helping other people	1	2	3	4	5
12. Helping to reduce poverty and hunger in Canada	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Unsure	Quite Important	Extremely Important
13. Helping to make the world a better place in which to live	1	2	3	4	5
14. Being religious or spiritual	1	2	3	4	5
15. Helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly	1	2	3	4	5
16. Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am	1	2	3	4	5
17. Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities)	1	2	3	4	5
18. Giving time to make life better for others	1	2	3	4	5
19. Giving money to make life better for others	1	2	3	4	5
20. Doing what I believe is right, even when it is unpopular to do so	1	2	3	4	5
21. Telling the truth even when it is not easy	1	2	3	4	5
22. Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake	1	2	3	4	5
23. Accepting responsibility for my actions even if I will get in trouble	1	2	3	4	5

24. If I think it is wrong to do something
1___ I will not do it.
2___ I might do it once in awhile.
3___ I would do it anyway.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

At my age, I think it is wrong for ME to

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. drink alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
26. use drugs	1	2	3	4	5
27. smoke cigarettes	1	2	3	4	5
28. gamble	1	2	3	4	5
29. have sex	1	2	3	4	5
30. lie or cheat	1	2	3	4	5
31. steal or shoplift	1	2	3	4	5

During an <u>average week</u>, how much time do you spend…?

	Number of Hours					
	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11 or more
32.Doing some type of physical exercise	0	1	2	3	4	5
33. Playing on a sports team at school	0	1	2	3	4	5
34. Playing on a sports team in the community	0	1	2	3	4	5
35. Helping with sports at school	0	1	2	3	4	5
36. Helping with sports team in the community.	0	1	2	3	4	5
37. In clubs or organizations at school	0	1	2	3	4	5
38. In clubs or organizations outside of school	0	1	2	3	4	5
39. Volunteering your time to help other people (NOT neighbors or friends)	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Number of Hours					
	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11 or more
40. Helping friends or neighbors	0	1	2	3	4	5
41. Being involved in religious activities or groups	0	1	2	3	4	5
42. Practicing or taking lessons in music, art, drama, dance after school	0	1	2	3	4	5
43. Being a leader in a group or organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
44. Watching TV/movies	0	1	2	3	4	5
45. Being on the Internet or computer	0	1	2	3	4	5

46. The following is a list of 22 strengths that people might have. Check off all the strengths that you see *in yourself at least some of the time*. Under "Other" add any strengths that you see *in yourself* that are not listed here.

1 ____ Respectful to myself and others

2 ____ Healthy

3 ____ Friendly

4 ____ Good at making and keeping friends

5 ____ Honest

6 ____ Caring

7 ____ Make choices that are good for me

8 ____ Leader

9 ____ Creative

10 ____ Sense of humor

11 ____ Open-minded

12 ____ Trusting

13 ____ Accepts criticism

14 ____ Positive thinker

15 ____ Responsible

16 ____ Determined

17 ____ Intelligent

18 ____ Laid-back

19 ____ Independent

20 ____ Role Model

21 ____ Athletic

22 Other_____

You and Your Friends

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47. My friends think I am a responsible person	1	2	3	4	5
48. I can trust my friends	1	2	3	4	5
49. My friends think it is wrong for teen-agers to physically fight with each other	1	2	3	4	5
50. My friends think my parents are okay	1	2	3	4	5
51. I would talk to my friends if I wanted to know more about drugs, alcohol and sex	1	2	3	4	5
52. I can talk to my friends if something bothers me	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
53. My friends talk to me about things that concern them	1	2	3	4	5
54. My friends are more important to me than my parents	1	2	3	4	5
55. I feel safe with my friends	1	2	3	4	5
56. My friends think it is okay NOT to smoke cigarettes	1	2	3	4	5
57. My friends think it is okay NOT to drink alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
58. My friends think it is okay NOT to use drugs	1	2	3	4	5
59. My friends think it is okay NOT to have sex	1	2	3	4	5

You and Your Parents

******In this survey, parents are the adults most responsible for raising you. They could be foster parents, stepparents, or relatives/guardians***

60. Which of the following best describes your parents?

1____ I live with my two biological parents.
2____ I live with one-parent
3____ I live with one-parent and a stepparent
4____ I live in a foster home
5____ I live with relatives/guardians

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61. My parents think I am a responsible person	1	2	3	4	5
62. My parents can trust me	1	2	3	4	5
63. I know my parents care about me	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
64. I get along well with my parents	1	2	3	4	5
65. My parents give me help and support when I need it	1	2	3	4	5
66. My parents often tell me they love me	1	2	3	4	5
67. In my family, I feel useful and important	1	2	3	4	5
68. My parents encourage me to be the best I can be	1	2	3	4	5
69. In my family there are clear rules about what I can and can not do	1	2	3	4	5
70. I think it is okay for my parents to set rules even if sometimes I get mad at the rules	1	2	3	4	5
71. My parents want to know where I am going when I go out	1	2	3	4	5
72. My parents want to know who I am going to be with when I go out	1	2	3	4	5
73. If I break one of my parent's rules, there is usually some type of consequence	1	2	3	4	5
74. I have a lot of good conversations with my parents	1	2	3	4	5
75. I would talk to my parents if I wanted to know more about sex, drugs or alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
76. I can talk to my parents if something is bothering me	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77. My parents spend a lot of time helping other people	1	2	3	4	5
78. My parents think my friends are okay	1	2	3	4	5
79. I feel safe at home	1	2	3	4	5

You and Your Siblings (Brothers and Sisters)

In this survey, brothers and sisters mean brothers and sisters that have the same mother and father as you, stepbrothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters.

80. How many brothers do you have?
I have _____ brother(s). (fill in the number of brothers you have – put 0 if you have no brothers)

81. How many sisters do you have?
I have _____ sister(s). (fill in the number of sisters you have – put 0 if you have no sisters)

82. I am the
1____ only child in my family
2____ oldest child in the family
3____ youngest child in the family

4_____ child in the family (put in where you fit in the family.
Example: second oldest, third oldest)

83. I care about what happens to my brother(s) and sister(s). (check one)
1____ Yes
2____ No
3____ Sometimes
4____ I do not have brothers and sisters

84. My brothers and sisters care about what happens to me. (check one)
1____ Yes
2____ No
3____ Sometimes
4____ I do not have brothers and sisters

You and Your School

85. **On average**, what grades do you earn in school? (check one)
1__less than 50%
2__50-64%
3__65-79%
4__80-100%

86. **On average**, how much time do you spend doing homework per night? (check one)
1__None
2__less than one hour
3__one to two hours
4__more than two hours

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
87. At school, I try as hard as I can to do my best work	1	2	3	4	5
88. I respect my teachers	1	2	3	4	5
89. My teachers respect me	1	2	3	4	5
90. My teachers think I am a responsible person	1	2	3	4	5
91. Teachers at school encourage me to be the best I can be	1	2	3	4	5
92. I understand what is taught in school so I can do the homework	1	2	3	4	5
93. I never or hardly ever skip school	1	2	3	4	5
94. In my school, there are clear rules about what students can and cannot do	1	2	3	4	5
95. I care about my school	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
96. At my school, everyone knows that they are not allowed to smoke cigarettes, use drugs or drink alcohol at school	1	2	3	4	5
97. Students in my school care about me	1	2	3	4	5
98. Students are punished if they break the rules	1	2	3	4	5
99. Students help decide what goes on my school	1	2	3	4	5
100. I feel safe at my school	1	2	3	4	5

How often does one of your parents (adults responsible for looking after you)

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
101. Help you with your schoolwork if you ask for help	1	2	3	4	5
102. Talk to you about what you are doing in school	1	2	3	4	5
103. Ask about your homework	1	2	3	4	5
104. Go to events at your school	1	2	3	4	5

You and Your Community

How many adults, *other than your parents,* have your known for two or more years who

	None	One	Two	Three	More than three
105. Give you lots of encouragement whenever they see you	0	1	2	3	4
106. You look forward to spending time with	0	1	2	3	4

	None	One	Two	Three	More than three
107. Spend time helping other people	0	1	2	3	4
108. Talk with you at least once a month	0	1	2	3	4
109. You can talk to if something is bothering you	0	1	2	3	4
110. You feel safe with	0	1	2	3	4

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Adults, <u>other than your parents,</u> who live in the study town…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
111. Care about teenagers living in study town	1	2	3	4	5
112. Are good role models for teenagers	1	2	3	4	5
113. Try to make study town safe for teenagers	1	2	3	4	5
114. Think it is wrong for teenagers to drink alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
115. Think it is wrong for teenagers to do drugs	1	2	3	4	5
116. Think it is wrong for teenagers to smoke cigarettes	1	2	3	4	5
117. Think it is wrong for teenagers to have sex	1	2	3	4	5
118. Think it is wrong for teenagers to gamble	1	2	3	4	5
119. Like doing activities with teenagers	1	2	3	4	5
120. Think teenagers are responsible people	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
121. See the good in teenagers	1	2	3	4	5

Please read this question carefully!

122. The following is a list of 22 strengths that people might have. Think about people who know you well, **including your parents, friends, teachers and community members**. Check off all the strengths that *you think they would see in you at least some of the time*. Under "Other" add any other strengths that *you think they would see in you at least some of the time*.

1 ____ Respectful to myself and others

2 ____ Healthy

3 ____ Friendly

4 ____ Good at making and keeping friends

5 ____ Honest

6 ____ Caring

7 ____ Make choices that are good for me

8 ____ Leader

9 ____ Creative

10 ____ Sense of humor

11 ____ Open-minded

12 ____ Trusting

13 ____ Accepts criticism

14 ____ Positive Thinker

15 ____ Responsible

16 ____ Determined

17 ____ Intelligent

[18]____ Laid-back

[19]____ Independent

[20]____ Role Model

[21]____ Athletic

[22]Other_____
_____

123. What is the best thing about growing up in study town?

124. Any additional comments?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

[9-11, 13-18, 21-23, 40, 64-67, 69, 74, 77, 87,94, 95, 97, 105, 106, 108] taken from *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*, copyright ©1996 Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN. Used by permission.

Appendix 2

Student Consent Form

Elementary School

Hi, my name is Jan Robbins-Chant. I work as a Youth Addictions Counselor at AADAC in and the study town. I am also at the same time, like you, going to school. I am working towards getting my Masters Degree at the University of Alberta.

To get my Master's Degree, I have to do a big research project. I read a lot of information about kids, some good and some bad. I would like to hear from kids what they think is good and bad about teenagers in general.

As a result, I made up a survey called The Strengths of Youth. There are 124 questions in the survey. There are questions about you, your family, your friends, your school and your community. You are also asked what you think your strengths are and what strengths you think other people see in you. You also have a chance to write down comments you might want to make about the survey, your strengths, your community or anything else that you think of.

You can decide if you want to complete the survey. You can decide not to answer certain questions. You can stop doing the survey at anytime. You will have the option to complete the survey on March 28, 2001. The survey will take about 50 minutes to complete. You can do it while sitting in your classroom. You can call me if you have any questions about the survey. My phone number is 780-778-7123. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings about the survey, please see your school counselor, _____. His phone number is _____. If you have any other concerns about the survey, please talk to your principal, _____.

Do NOT put your name anywhere on the survey. Please put the survey back in the envelope so no one will know if you filled it out. No one will know how individual people answered the survey unless something was said on the surveys that made it necessary to report it to the law.

Before you start the survey, you have to sign on the line below to show that no one is making you do it.

I agree to take part in this research study

Please print your name _____

Please sign your name _____

Date _____

Student Consent Form

High School

Hi, my name is Jan Robbins-Chant. I work as a Youth Addictions Counselor at AADAC in and the study town. I am also at the same time, like you, going to school. I am working towards getting my Masters Degree at the University of Alberta.

To get my Master's Degree, I have to do a big research project. I read a lot of information about kids, some good and some bad. I would like to hear from kids what they think is good and bad about teenagers in general.

As a result, I made up a survey called The Strengths of _____ Youth. There are 124 questions in the survey. There are questions about you, your family, your friends, your school and your community. You are also asked what you think your strengths are and what strengths you think other people see in you. You also have a chance to write down comments you might want to make about the survey, your strengths, your community or anything else that you think of.

You can decide if you want to complete the survey. You can decide not to answer certain questions. You can stop doing the survey at anytime. You will have the option to complete the survey on March 28, 2001. The survey will take about 50 minutes to complete. You can do it while sitting in your classroom. You can call me if you have any questions about the survey. My phone number is 780-778-7123. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings about the survey, please see your school counselor, _____. Her phone number is _____. If you have any other concerns about the survey, please talk to your principal, _____.

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I agree to take part in this research study

Please print your name _____

Please sign your name _____

Date _____

External Factors

Category	*Factor Name and Definition*	
CONNECTIONS	1. **Family Connections**	-Parents provide love, support and communicate well with their children.
	2. **Sibling Connections**	-Siblings care about their brothers and sisters & brothers and sisters care about them.
	3. **Adult Connections**	-Adults are good role models, care about youth and see youth as responsible.
	4. **Adult Connections 2**	-Youth know 3 or more adults who are not their parents whom they can rely on.
	5. **Peer Connections**	-Peers talk to their friends about things that concern them; youth feel safe with friends.
	6. **School Connections**	-The school makes youth feel safe, allows youth to help decide what goes on at school and creates a caring atmosphere for youth.
RULES AND EXPECTATIONS	7. **Family Rules and Expectations**	-Parents set clear rules and consequences & have high expectations of youth.
	8. **Adult Expectations**	-Adults expect youth to refrain from being involved in negative behaviors such as drinking, doing drugs, or smoking.
	9. **Peer Expectations**	-Peers accept their friends' decision not to drink, smoke, do drugs or have sex.
	10. **School Rules and Expectations**	-The school has clear rules and consequences, teachers encourage students to do their best and students care about other youth.
INVOLVEMENT	11. **Physical Activity**	- Youth are involved in physical activity, play on a sports team or help a sports team for 3 or more hours per week
	12. **Structured and Unstructured Act.**	- Youth are involved in clubs, organizations or groups and/or volunteer their time for 3 or more hours per week.

Internal Factors

Category	*Factor Name and Definition*	
DESIRE TO LEARN	13. **Making it Work At School**	- Youth try to do their best work, seldom skip school, respect their teachers, teachers respect them and youth are seen as responsible.
	14. **Parental Involvement**	- Youth are encouraged to do well in school because of their parents involvement ask about homework, help them with homework and attend school events.
BELIEFS AND VALUES	15. **Equality and Social Justice**	- Youth believe in the value of helping others and treating people fairly and equally and being spiritual.
	16. **Integrity**	- Youth believe that it is important to take responsibility for their actions and do what is right even when it is unpopular to do so.
	17. **Responsibility and Trust**	- Youth see themselves as responsible and trustworthy and their friends and parents see them as responsible.
	18. **Resistance Skills and Restraint**	- At the age they are now, youth think it is wrong for them to drink, do drugs, smoke, have sex, lie, cheat, steal or shoplift.
	19. **Personal Power**	- Youth feel glad to be themselves, are usually happy, have control over their lives and think they will have a good future
RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS	20. **Interpersonal Competence**	- Youth see themselves as friendly, caring and good at making friends
	21. **Leadership Qualities**	- Youth see themselves as positive thinkers, independent and a role model.
	22. **Personal Flexibility**	- Youth see themselves as being laid- back and accepting of criticism.
	23. **Interpersonal Competence**	- Others see youth as friendly, caring and good at making friends
	24. **Leadership Qualities**	- Others see youth as positive thinkers, independent and a role model
	25. **Personal Flexibility**	- Others see youth as being laid- back and accepting of criticism

Appendix 4

Descriptive Statistics After Replacing Missing Values

a) Connections

Statistics

		FAMCONN	SIBCONN	ADULCONN	ADUCONN2	PEERCONN	SCOCONN
N	Valid	305	305	305	305	305	305
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		49.97	3.25	19.92	16.91	15.79	13.50
Std. Deviation		7.82	1.70	4.95	5.74	3.35	3.42
Variance		61.13	2.89	24.52	32.95	11.22	11.72
Minimum		25	2	6	0	4	4
Maximum		63	8	30	24	20	20

b) Rules and Expectations

Statistics

		FAMEXPEC	ADULEXPE	PEEREXPE	SCHOEXPE
N	Valid	305	305	305	305
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		24.95	18.14	15.20	15.30
Std. Deviation		4.06	5.18	4.41	2.76
Variance		16.51	26.88	19.46	7.62
Minimum		10	5	4	6
Maximum		30	25	20	20

c) Involvement

Statistics

		PHYSACT	STRUCACT
N	Valid	305	305
	Missing	0	0
Mean		8.16	8.55
Std. Deviation		5.73	6.34
Variance		32.82	40.25
Minimum		0	0
Maximum		25	32

d) Desire to Learn

Statistics

		MAKWORK	PARINVOL
N	Valid	305	305
	Missing	0	0
Mean		23.30	14.86
Std. Deviation		4.41	3.72
Variance		19.45	13.83
Minimum		6	4
Maximum		30	20

e) Beliefs and Values

Statistics

		EQUAJUST	INTEGRIT	RESPTRUS	RESISTAN	PERSPOWE
N	Valid	305	305	305	305	305
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		31.29	15.35	16.48	24.31	19.71
Std. Deviation		7.77	3.50	2.40	8.07	2.94
Variance		60.33	12.23	5.78	65.13	8.62
Minimum		11	4	7	7	6
Maximum		45	20	20	35	25

f) Statistics - Recognizing Strengths in Self

Statistics

		INTERSEL	LEADSELF	FLEXSELF
N	Valid	305	305	305
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		7.60	5.25	2.64
Std. Deviation		2.18	2.14	1.13
Variance		4.75	4.56	1.27
Minimum		0	0	0
Maximum		9	8	4

g) Statistics - Recognizing Strengths Others See in Self

Statistics

		INTEROTH	LEADEOTH	FLEXOTHE
N	Valid	305	305	305
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		6.80	5.53	3.40
Std. Deviation		2.04	2.27	1.46
Variance		4.15	5.13	2.14
Minimum		0	0	0
Maximum		8	8	5